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SLAUGHTER IN PODLASIE

Notes from the Holocaust

By M. I. Faigenbaum

Translated from the Yiddish by L. M. Zell

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FOREWORD

By M. Weinreich

Among the many books that have appeared on the subject of our Holocaust, this book by M.I. Faigenbaum will take a place of honor.

Whether there should have been an analysis made here of the character of the catastrophe in general or of the nature of the Unmensch in general, there certainly can be little doubt about whether one should write about such things today. Others say that the number of possible generalizations is limited and that everything that could be said has been said already. I take the opposite view-- the enormous scope of the material in the archives of YIVO⁰ clearly demonstrates to me that the time for making general observations has not yet arrived. There is simply no adequate factual basis for such generalizations. In the meantime there is no other choice than for one to begin with general concepts. However, the problems that the Jewish Holocaust has created for us and for the entire world cannot be answered by playing with ideas. Fortunately, there are living witnesses.

We have to build our understanding upon a solid foundation of details and only from such facts may we come to more general conclusions.

Faigenbaum's book has great merit in that it contains rather few observations about people and events. When he does fall into trap of making simple characterizations of the misfortune or the murderers, he immediately pulls himself out of it and returns to what he alone can tell us: that which he alone experienced.

And in this regard, there is no repetition, as many documents of this kind we could find, it still would not be enough, because each of the six million died his special and unique death and each of the survivors was saved through a chain of special and unique miracles.

The Jews of Biala and Mezritch will pay particular attention to the hundreds of local personalities mentioned by Faigenbaum. Among the names and nicknames they will recognize their own and those of their dear ones. But this book is not only for "Landsleit," but for all Jews without exception. We, who may never have had any relatives in Biala or Mezritch, get here a description of Jewish fate. This is how the Jews struggled for their lives under the Germans and how they were taken from this world. By thinking and reflecting on the pictures which the author has painted for us with remarkable vitality, we can better understand the problems which have not ceased plaguing us.

*How exactly did the Jews themselves perceive the coming end for which they had been sentenced?

*How far will man sacrifice himself solely for the sake of his dear ones?

*What is a man capable of doing when his own life is at stake?

⁰ Yidishe Visenshaftliker Institut-Institute for the Study of Yiddish

*When will a man's will to resist be broken, so that he will decided that it is no longer worthwhile suffering any longer?

*What did people fee when, as Faigenbaum puts it, "they have lost respect for the majesty of death?"

*Were there sporadic cases of resistance in the early days of the Ghetto?

*Were the Jews able to rise up en masse, as they began to realize what was happening?

*How justifiable is the argument that "others" would not have let themselves be lead to the slaughter?

* What role did the Judenrat play?

* Were there any good Germans?

* What was the relationship between the Gentile population and the Jews and between the non-Jewish partisans in the forests?

To these questions and many others, Faigenbaum's boook helps us find an answer. The reader will peruse this book with a tremor in his heart and will not be able to put it down until he has finished. The scholar will study the accounts as a first-class historical resource. And we will all admire the author who found in himself the strength to recreate his experiences on paper.

M. Weinreich New York, August 1948

PREFACE

Of all the hardships suffered by Polish Jewry during the murderous occupation of Hitler's executioners from 1939 on, it is the [epilogue] of that bloody tragedy that stands out as the most gruesome. In the language of the Nazis this was called variously "Übersiedlung" or "Aussiedlung" ("Resettlement").

The words "Übersiedlung" or "Aussiedlung" refer to the transportation of people from one place of residence to another. Ordinary [bona fide] resettlement actions are tragic enough --and the Germans carried out this type as well. They deported whole communities of Jews from countless towns in Poland and abroad. In some cases they permitted the deportees to take a few things with them, but in others they drove the Jews out with nothing but the shirts on their backs --but at best the Jews were able to have the bare essentials of life with them.

What the Nazis later politely termed Übersiedlung in order to trick the Jews, defies all belief. Jewish history is filled with bloody pages, but what happened to Polish Jewry under the rule of the psychopath Hitler was unprecedented and without parallel.

Clad with the infamous yellow armbands, forced to carry yellow passports and locked up in sealed ghettos, Jews were not able to move from one place to another; there was nowhere to flee.

Baptism, which in another age worked to save Jews from death, simply had no effect this time, since even the converts were classified as Jews. In the past, Jews were able to buy themselves a reprieve from execution with money, but in this instance, money was of no avail -- rich and poor alike were destroyed.

Polish Jews had essentially separated themselves from their Christian neighbors. As a consequence, they were easily recognized. Where Polish police participated in the Aktions, Jews were identified and separated from the Gentiles with particular ease. If a Jew was successful in evading the Nazis' clutches, he would usually be arrested by the Polish police.

The Christian population, which in large measure held a negative view on the matter of rescuing Jews, helped to wipe out Jewish lives in a great many cases. In this regard the lust on the part of the Poles for Jewish property played a major role. It is worth noting that the fact that it was in Poland that the Germans chose to build the death camps to which millions of people were transported from all corners of Europe.

There were, however, a few exceptions among the Christian population who did risk their lives to help the condemned Jews.

The Nazis saw it as their mission to annihilate the Jewish people. At first they began to impose restrictions on the Jews. Then they started transporting Jews to various camps. They would catch Jews by enclosing them in ghettos. Perhaps they thought that the latter was the best approach, since, cut off from the rest of the world, the Jews should have perished from starvation alone. But here the Germans were disappointed again, because within the sealed ghettos people were able to adapt and acquire goods, which were not to be found in the free Aryan sectors outside the ghettos. Christians, who used to smuggle themselves into the Warsaw

Ghetto, used to say that the the Ghetto was the real Warsaw, since there things were alive, while outside the Ghetto, everything seemed lifeless. It gave them the impression of a small-town existence.

When all other attempts to destroy Polish Jewry failed, the Nazis turned to other means in early 1942. It was at this time that Himmler came to Poland and the Aktions and deportations began. The events of this period can be divided into several phases:

1. Dispatching isolated transports of victims from towns, while leaving the remaining Jews alone for a short period of time. This took place at the beginning of the summer 1942.
2. The destruction of entire communities on the spot through mass shootings and deportations to the death camps. (Summer and autumn 1942).
3. Concentration of Jews in a few cities, whence they were sent to slave labor and extermination camps. (Fall 1942).
4. Complete liquidation of the surviving populations through on-site exterminations or through deportation to the concentration camps. (1943).

I lack the strength to describe everything that was perpetrated against Polish Jewry, especially given my psychological state and the circumstances in which I find myself locked up underground. Perhaps this bloody and ignominious epoch will have its historian one day. I shall simply record a few events, culled from this bloody and terrible chaos which the murderers called Aussiedlungen--resettlement actions.

What is written here I alone have witnessed and experienced. In those cases where I was not personally present, I have relied upon credible eyewitnesses whose stories I have carefully verified. I recorded dates and events from the outset.

It is possible that there will be many who, like Bialik in his "Shehita Shtat" ["City of Slaughter"], may be furious at Polish Jewry for having let itself be lead like cattle to the slaughter. To these I would say: at a time when powerful armed European nations were themselves being trammled by Hitler's chains and when civilian populations were subjected to the whims of their Aryan overlords, what could we have really done? Let's take a recent example. If the Polish people could remain mute while its intelligentsia was systematically liquidated (no doubt something similar took place in other countries) what could anyone expect from a defenseless and helpless Jewry?

Polish Jewry clearly saw that it had been sentenced to die; that there was absolutely no possibility of a pardon; and that any resistance would have been futile. People believed that resistance would have actually caused even more suffering for

those who were already standing on the edge of the grave. They believed that the murderers would brutally punish even those who had been condemned to death, which was hardly a secret.

It would have been a simple matter for Polish Jewry to mount a resistance if only to avenge their honor -- to show the vampires that we would not let ourselves be slaughtered like cattle and that we could die like heroes. In this respect, however, one should not forget that the bloody deportation actions began only after three years of Nazi occupation and rule, during which time the Jews of Poland had already been thoroughly depressed and exhausted by daily torment. They were already disoriented and deprived of all functioning community institutions, which had they existed could have issued a call to arms early on. Another important factor was the recognition by the Jews that they could not count on receiving help or support from outside the ghettos.

All this notwithstanding, there were a number of towns in which heroic uprisings did occur. What courage these Jewish fighters displayed! Will they one day merit a mention in history? Will our heroes be remembered one day?

You should not expect to find any literary jewels in the notes that follow, drafted as they were in subterranean caves by the light of a tallow lamp, my wounds burning terribly all the while. Let this bunch of recollections, ripped out of a bleeding heart, be a fragment of a tombstone for the unmarked grave of my never-to-be forgotten, beloved wife, Minka (nee Zatorska) and my little daughter, Basyele, who were cut down by the German beasts during the first bloody deportation action in Mezritch Podlaska on August 25, 1942 (12 Elul 5702).

Biala -- September 1943 -- Written in an underground hideout in a garden outside of town.

"I have lost my love, woe is me and alack . . . "

(From a folksong)

[Here insert photograph of Minka Zatorska Faigenboim]

The wife I shall never forget.

Document 1. Proclamation prohibiting Jews from travelling by rail. (Translation at page ____).

Document 2. Proclamation prohibiting Jews from leaving their towns of residence. (Translation at page ____).

(Taken from the Biala Municipal Archives after the Liberation).

[Here insert photostats of indicated Nazi documents].

BIALA

Pain and Suffering

Biala -- a provincial town on the Warsaw-Brest-Litovsk rail line. A clean and pretty provincial seat with a Jewish population that numbered some 6,000 souls just before the war and reached approximately 8,500 by December 1941.

During the period of Polish independence [prior to the final partition of the Polish state in 1792], Biala belonged to the district and county of Brest-Litovsk. The records of the old District Council contained in the chronicles of the chief Lithuanian Jewish Community (Paragraph 89) show that Biala was incorporated in the Jewish communal district of Brest-Litovsk. The poll tax records for 1705 indicate that Biala's Jews and tenant farmers had to pay 510 zlotys. Later under Russian occupation, Biala became a county seat in the Siedlice Province ("gubernye").

According to the Charter of Privileges of August 1, 1671, Biala's Jews had the right to own 30 houses. In 1841 the total population of Biala (which at that time belonged to the Podlasie Province) was 3,588 of whom 2,220 were Jews. There were two brick synagogues. In 1856 Biala was incorporated into Lublin Province and had a population of 1,333 christians and 2,561 Jews. The budget for the synagogues was 550 rubels in 1849; 673 rubles in 1853 and 889 rubles in 1859). According to the census of 1897, the Biala region had 76,687 inhabitants of whom 16,658 were Jews. In the town of Biala proper there were 6,549 Jews out of a total population of 13,090.

Those communities in the county of Biala with a population of more than 500 and which had the highest percentage of Jews were:

Kodnye (Total pop. 2,772; 1,057 Jews)

Lomaz (Total pop. 3,183; 1,793 Jews)

Pishchatz (Total pop. 1,939; 886 Jews)

Rososh (Total pop. 1,929; 590 Jews)

Slavatitsh (Total pop. 2,769; 1,707 Jews)

Terespol (Total pop. 4,107; 2,573 Jews)

By and large the most common occupations for the Jews in the town and in the county were retailing and textiles (from the Jewish Encyclopedia --Evreiskaia Encykalpedia)

According to the census of 1921 the number of Jews living in Biala reached 6,875. At the census of December 9, 1931, the Jewish population of the entire Biala county was 14,288 of whom 4,734 men and 5,342 women lived in the towns and 2,013 men and 2,199 women lived in the villages.

A report from the Biala Judenrat to the Jewish social self-help agency in Lublin dated August 29, 1942 gave the following demographic statistics:

<u>Town</u>		<u>Total Jewish Pop.</u>	<u>Homeless</u>
Biala Podlaska	4,800	1,883	
Yaneve		1,883	40
Konstantin	1,150	212	
Kodnye	163	37	
Rososh	433	152	
Wishnitz	1,025	509	
Pishchatz	965	425	
Terespol	284	98	
<u>Slawatitsh</u>	<u>1,154</u>	<u>480</u>	
TOTALS	11,857	3,453	

(The report omitted those Biala Jews who had been deported on June 10, 1942 as well as those interned in camps. The Jewish community of Lomaz was also not included, inasmuch as it had been liquidated on the night of August 17, 1942. Before the mass slaughter there were approximately 1,700 living in Lomaz.)

In the first weeks of the German occupation in 1939 conditions were relatively bearable. Jews had actually begun to doubt the accuracy of the news reports in the pre-war press about the hellish experience of Jews in Germany.

This situation did not last long, however, and the bitter truth began to manifest itself. Since Biala was a county seat, Hitler's "Lüstigen Knaben" (happy boys), the

infamous Gestapo, arrived and installed themselves in the mansion of Raabe, the manufacturer. For the Jews the hard times were about to begin.

The first task of the newly arrived Gestapo staff was to requisition a 10,000 zloty contribution from the Jewish community. To assure prompt payment, a number of wealthy Jewish inhabitants were arrested, thrown into jail and beaten mercilessly. They were freed only after the demanded sums had been deposited.

The misdeeds of the brown-shirted murderers evoked such a panic among the Jews that the printer Abraham Lubeltshik suffered a heart attack and dropped dead on the spot, merely upon hearing that the Gestapo were coming for him.

The Judenrat, created by the Nazis and lead by Yitzhak Fizhitz, became the Germans' mouthpiece and liaison to the Jewish community. The Judenrat received incessant demands for enormous sums of money all of which had to be remitted without a moment's delay. The Judenrat even became the source of forced labor for the "high-cultured" Germans, having to supply the Nazis with a steady stream of streetworkers, who reported daily to the Judenrat with vouchers from the Gestapo.

As a reward for their services, members of the Judenrat were often beaten by the Sadists. Once on a Shabbat during a bitter frost, several members of the Judenrat were assembled together with other Jews and forced to do calisthenics in the town square. This all took place in front of the window of the Russian immigration commission which at that time functioned in Biala.

When it came to punishing and humiliating Jews, the Gestapo Commissar S.S. Obersturmführer Hildemann and his aide Kott distinguished themselves. Other officials, too, with whom the town was full, did not refrain from making demands on the Judenrat. In this regard, the following personages stand out in particular: Vice Kreishauptmann, Fritsch von Dresden, a typical underworld figure, who daily asserted new demands all of which had to be promptly fulfilled. Quickly forgetting that which he had received, he continued to blackmail the Judenrat. The more he got from the Jews, the more demands he made upon them. In order to squeeze new gifts from the Jews, he used to send workers to build a fence around the Jewish quarter[?]. He was the first project-builder [developer] of the Jewish quarter, in which the Jews of Biala were herded quite early in comparison to Jews in other towns. From that moment to the last day, the Jews were to suffer from severe shortage of living quarters.

When the Germans demanded gifts, how much worse were our friendly, Polish officials, to whom the Jews had to come from time to time? Thus did the Mayor with utter gall demand gifts for himself, as did Engineer Antony Walawski and his assistant, the Ethnic German, Szczepanski, who before the war had come to Biala from Posen as a watchmaker. The director of the Housing Department, Bielecki, did not know what else next to demand from the Jews.

By the end of the year 1939 Jews from Suwalk and Serotck had been brought to Biala. We began to learn from them what the term "resettlement" meant in its German sense.

In the beginning of 1940, Jewish prisoners of war from the Polish army were brought into the Biala camp. They were in a frightful and miserable condition; many of them were seriously wounded. They had been driven naked and barefoot in a terrible frost all the way from Lublin to Parcewe. Whoever had fallen on the way was shot by the S.S. A few other prisoners had been shot for no apparent reason [just for the sake of it]. The route from Lublin to Parcewe was filled with victims together with a mass grave of some 300 slain.

The whole winter the Jewish Council was forced to supply workers every day. No matter how many it provided, it was too few; the Germans used to grab Jews in the streets for forced labor. Needless to say, they were paid nothing for their labor. What is more, the Jewish workers were severely beaten and punished while they worked.

At the same the offensive against France began, the offensive against the Jews in the labor front commenced. The Biala Jews Camp, which had been built during the winter, was now being filled with Jews from numerous towns in the General Government. They were subjected to the most terrible punishments and lived in the most shocking conditions. While only the Biala Jews were able to work in other different workplaces, a large number were forced to work in the camp as well. After work the Jews of Biala used to come home and rest a little while. They worked primarily in military-related jobs. But Jews were sought just for the sake of tormenting them. S.S. Lange and Schwach and the Ethnic Germans, Rutkowski (the younger) and Szeliwka, especially distinguished themselves for cruelty in the main camp and in its satellites.

Every day new restrictions were imposed on the Jews. Every minute -- new sorrows; the sole consolation is: no matter what happens, we are at least in our home town.

In Biala, where a branch of the S.D. ("Sicherheitsdienst")[Security Service] was located at 17 Pilsudski Street, Gestapo man, Germann, was installed as chief. He regularly demanded various gifts from the Jewish Council as well as political information. When the members of the Jewish council would provide him with the political information, such as how the Jewish population is occupied with the task of finding enough potatoes, fuel wood and other items for winter, all they received were broken bones.

The thought of being homeless, God forbid, never crossed anyone's mind. They would argue, quite logically: the Germans are trying to resettle Jews from the West to the east, and since we are located right up against the Russian border, where could they possibly send us?

True, at the beginning of 1941 several old and unemployed people were seized off the street and taken away in cars to the village of Apoleh, near Rososz, in Biala County. But this was only a small incident. Most of these people soon came back to Biala (after that time Jews were able to move about the streets freely).

It was under such conditions that we labored until the year 1942, when Jewish life took a new turn, when the rifle began its devil's dance. Jewish casualties increased daily, yet one did not dare to speak about them publicly nor was there anyone with whom to speak. A Jew would be dragged outside of town and shot dead on the spot. And in the ghetto when a Jew got into the hands of the Gestapo he would be shot and killed.

In January 1942 some 150 Jews from the villages of Dolhobroda, Holeszow and Hanna were driven into ghetto at Slawatitsz.

[HERE INSERT THE FOLLOWING TWO PHOTOGRAPHS OF BIALA PODLASKA:

Caption 1: "Biala: Prosta Street. A Board on Hershel Shneiman's house reads: 'Jewish Quarter.' --Photographed after the Liberation."

Caption 2: "Biala: Grabanowa Street.-- Photographed after the Liberation."]

About 140 Jews from the villages of Rozwaduwnka, Motwica and Czepotka were driven into Wisznice. These village Jews were forced out of their homes practically naked and barefoot and were prohibited from taking anything with them.

Shortly after Pesach, the Polish police arrested more than two dozen Jews who were shot to death by the Gestapo without any explanation or excuse.

In the beginning of April 1942 a rumor spread in Biala that the Jews of Lublin had been resettled, but no one knew where they had been taken. We tried to make it easier on ourselves by saying that the Jews of Lublin did not want to participate in forced labor, while each one of us was actively engaged in it. People also explained that the Lublin Jews had been told to make a contribution in gold, and that they had offered Russian gold rubles along with the other gold. Because of this they were suspected of having connections with Russia as a result of which they were punished with resettlement.

Different stories circulated about this event, but no one was in a position to discern the truth. Later we began to understand that the Lublin action was begun after the visit to Poland of the notorious Himmler and that this was the beginning of the end of Polish Jewry. It also became known that of the forty odd thousand Jews in Lublin, only about 5,000 were known to be located in a village near Lublin, Mайдан Tatarski. Where the rest had gone remained a secret, which was learned only later: their bones had been swallowed up by the sands of the Belzec death camp.

At about the same time a postcard was received at the Biala Jewish Council from the Jewish Council in Sosnowiec, which asked whether a train carrying Jewish children from Sosnowiec had passed through Biala. They were shocked into believing that something terrible had happened but they could grasp the scope of the tragedy.

[HERE INSERT FACSIMILE OF DOCUMENT NO. 3, WITH FOLLOWING CAPTION:

"Document 3: The decree which destroyed the Jews of Lublin."

Next page bears this caption:

"Continued from page 18 (translation at page __)
Archives of the Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland."]

[HERE INSERT DIAGRAM BEARING THE FOLLOWING CAPTION:

"Location plan of the Belzec death camp.
Left: Above and below, mass graves; center: gas chambers.
Right: above, train platform; below barracks for camp personnel.
Archives of the Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland."]

The First Resettlement

The month of May passed by and in our own unending misery we forgot all about the tragedy in Lublin. Suddenly, on Shabbat, June 6, 1942 (21 Sivan 5702), a message arrived that hit us like a bolt of lightening: there were rumors that the Jews would have to leave Biala. One piece of bad news followed the other. The town was astir--there was great panic--still we could not learn anything concrete.

It wasn't long, however, before the first real announcement appeared, stating that at about 10:00 in the morning two representatives from County headquarters (Lipkow and Debus) had arrived at the Jewish Council and had announced that in accordance with an order of the authorities, on Wednesday, June 10, (25 Sivan) 6000 Jews were supposed to report to the train station for departure; this was everyone who was not being used by the Labor Office. The same order was in effect for all other provincial towns in Biala County. All working Jews from the whole county would be located only in Biala. With the exception of the town of Biala, the entire county would be Judenrein ("cleared of Jews"). The Chairman of the Jewish Council, Zionist Ya'akov Aharon Rosenbojm, asked where the people would be taken. The representative for population affairs, Lipkow, answered that they would be taken west. The chairman of the Jewish Council made a further observation that he was aware of the fact that the Jews of the West were being resettled in the East. If so, then with what did the Biala Jews {translation unclear} that they would be sent west? The representative was lost in thought for a moment, but quickly recovered himself and began to play on our heart strings: "You are," he said, "in a situation where the men virtually live in the synagogue and in the other prayer houses. Yes, it is true, declared Jewish Council chairman, Y. A.

Rosenbojm --we would have had nothing against improving the situation of the people, but we know full well that this is not consistent with the policy of the Nazi government. What does it matter to you if people want to die here?"

The representative did not expect this kind of a discussion. Not having anything else to say, he answered: "Rosenberg, you see everything is black colors. We won't be able to get any cooperation from you this way."

The Jewish Council began a frenetic campaign to get the decree cancelled. They knocked on every door, but the Gestapo just said they knew absolutely nothing and wondered why noone trusted them when it came to this "small matter."

The Council was able to learn that the decree had been issued in Lublin. But the people there would not give us any idea about the number of people who would have to be transferred.

The Council soon realized that it would not be able to have the decree rescinded, since county headquarters was only interested in seeing that the action would be carried out.

The Jewish Council then struggled to get the decree mollified. They labored ceaselessly using different connections. Bribes were paid left and right. Finally around Monday the situation became clear. By then every one already knew who would have to take out their hiking sticks.

The only people entitled to remain were those with valid work papers. Persons holding work cards were allowed to keep their wives and children up to the age of 14 years. Wives and children were to receive special stamped slips from the Labor Office, with which they would be able to demonstrate their status before the authorities. Manual laborers and merchants who were approved by the County headquarters to stay were to receive stamped slips for themselves, their wives and children 14 and under.

All those who were leaving were allowed to bring with them no more than 10 kilograms (22 lbs.) of hand luggage.

Any one who was designated to leave and who refused to comply was subject to the death penalty.

The Jewish Council was advised by the authorities that they were supposed to direct the resettlement action in conjunction with the Jewish Police ["Yidishe Ordnungs-dinst"]. In the event anything did not go according to plan, the authorities would intervene which could have tragic consequences and the local authorities did not wish to see any blood spilled... .

On Tuesday the Jewish Council notified the everyone in the Jewish community about the action through public announcements in the streets. They specified that the Shul Hoyf (school yard) would be the assembly point for the transferees.

How did the Jewish population react to this news?

By Sabbath when it was already quite clear that those with work papers would be able to stay, a large part of the community made great efforts in this direction and spared no amount of money to acquire the necessary documents. Many just succeeded in getting the cards of life.

Young men who had been going out with girls for years without any intention of getting married so long as the war was on, were quick to put up the Huppah to legitimize their brides as their wives thereby saving them from deportation. There also many fictitious marriages in order to save Jewish daughters.

There were those who having been unable to save themselves legally decided on the spot not to report and to hide themselves at the time of the action. At the same time many decided to slip away illegally into neighboring villages to stay with Christian acquaintances as well as to nearby Miedrezec (Yiddish: Mezritch). Those who had decided to be resettled set about preparing packs for the journey.

In the provincial towns of the county, Jews ran off to the forests. They had no intention whatsoever of showing up for the resettlement.

Tuesday afternoon it was the Tax Office's turn to show what it could do. Almost all of its officials together with the police swarmed over the ghetto trying to collect from the Jews past due taxes as well as taxes which had not yet been levied, even for the year 1942. They claimed enormously large sums, which had to be paid immediately, for in the event they were not paid, the delinquent parties would be arrested and taken to the resettlement transport.

The day was filled with the murderously sadistic deeds of a certain agent of the criminal police, Konstanti Baldiga, while an official of the Tax Office, Gerekh, worked diligently to ruin the Jews by imposing a tremendous tax burden on them.

That same day Yaakov Malina went off to County Headquarters to try to do something about the situation. By evening it was known that Malina had been driven off in an automobile outside of town where he was shot dead by Agent Baldiga.

That is how things went that Tuesday night, the last night before the forced emigration from our home town. It is very difficult to relate what was happening that night in those Jewish homes where people were getting ready for the journey. At dusk many people were saying goodbye to friends and acquaintances. There was an atmosphere of oppression and tension in the town; everyone was living as if in a nightmare. Parents had to separate from their children and some children, who were unfit for work, had to leave their parents.

There were tragic moments in many families. Parents could not give any advice to the children or children to their parents. No one had the courage to say to the other--"Stay here, for behind all of the orders there was one word that screamed out at you--Death!"

On Wednesday, June 10th, at about 5:00 a.m., some 700 souls had already assembled in the square, dressed in holiday clothes, with packages of varying sizes. People streamed into the Shul-Hoif from all directions. The Jewish police, which had been increased to 50 persons especially for this task, went around from room to room reminding people about their duty to present themselves at the square.

Those fortunate enough to be able to remain in town moved freely throughout the Jewish quarter where there was little control maintained.

Representative of the German authorities came to the square and surveyed the scene. They sent home a few cripples, the sick and women with infants. Among those sent back was Eliyahu Hoffman's (Bubke's) daughter with a child in her arms. The Germans announced that the sick, who were incapable of travelling, were to remain in their homes. This bolstered the impression that the people were merely being evacuated to another town. As a result, not a few people who had decided earlier not to show up at the square picked up their packs and went to the square.

This then was how it was during the last few minutes. People could not decide after all this what to do. Cried out eyes look into cried out eyes, seeking a word of advice. But who wanted to risk taking responsibility for another life?

About two o'clock in the afternoon, when the square was packed with people, the whole crowd was lead away by the Jewish Police and several gendarmes to the station where they were turned over to the Special Service ("Sonderdienst") of the County Headquarters. Those too weak to walk were taken by car to the trains.

What a tragic picture this was on the way to the station. Tear-filled eyes and stifled weeping--these were the last farewells for friends and acquaintances.

It was hard to make out all the Bialans who were marching in the procession. But you could catch a few faces of people you knew very well. Among those walking was Moshe Kawe (Einbinder), resigned and very aged, but known and beloved by everyone. With him was the teacher, Hillel Mayer, hunchbacked and kind-hearted.

The majestic figure of the merchant, Yosef Gitelman, strided by with his family along side. Two rows further back marched the merchant, Pintsche Edelman, with his wife and son. Right behind was the Gerer Hasid, Hertzal Tscharne, and his wife.

At the station they had to wait until morning when the train finally arrived to take the people away. The Jewish Council brought bread and coffee a few times.

On Thursday morning a freight train arrived and by about 11:00 o'clock a.m., the people had been loaded in the cars. The train pulled away in the direction of Lukow accompanied by an S.S. man and a few Ukrainian guards.

Thus were 2,500 people carried off in sealed freight cars torn away from their roots and home town and hurled into the unknown. All attempts to find out from the train engineer where the people were being taken were to no avail.

It was typical that there was not news from the poor villages, where the people remained unaffected by the day's events.

Only after the train had departed, a rumor spread throughout the Jewish quarter that the order for resettlement had recently been rescinded. It was a fact that the

Biala authorities, who were preparing for further transports, had become less strict. Whoever had not reported to the square for the first transport was able just to stay at home.

The Jewish Council wanted to offer a reward for anyone who could find out where the people had been taken. We learned from the Lukow Jewish Council that the train had left there headed for Lublin. From the Jewish Council in Lublin --that is, in Maidan Tatarski--word arrived that the people had gone off in the direction of Chelm. Chelm reported that on Friday evening the train had passed through the town heading towards Wlodawa. The last piece of news came from the Jewish Council in Wlodawa, which stated: "We don't know anything and from now on don't ask us about such things."

It was in Wlodawa that the string was cut. But because Wlodawa had answered in this fashion, we surmised that it was precisely in Wlodawa that we could find out what happened to them.

The sadness among the families that had been torn apart is impossible to describe. Only now did people reproach themselves for not having told their close ones to hide themselves. Every day rumors spread about the whereabouts of the deportees. But each time they were checked out they proved to be false. All the time a christian would arrive with a story about how he had seen the Jews here or there. A lot of money was paid out just to find out something about the fate of the people, but nothing ever turned up.

The County Headquarters was also very much aware of these rumors about the whereabouts of the deportees. They even came knocking at the Jewish Council to see what the Council knew of these things, but the Council replied: "We called on these people to report to the square, but where they were sent only you know, not we."

Actually the Jewish Council did learn about where they had sent the people. It turned out that the last train station on their route was "Sobibor," some 37 kilometers from Chelm in the direction of Wlodowa. Before the war, Sobibor was known as a small train stop in the woods in the Wlodowa region, whence they used to transport timber.

What they did with the people once they arrived continued to remain a secret. Later we heard that they were supposed to have brought many Jews to Sobibor where they were left crammed into freight cars on rail sidings in a forest for several days without food or a drop of water in the hot summer heat. Afterwards the dead bodies were thrown out of the cars, among which they found a few living people exhausted from heat, crowding and thirst. Then they were all burned.

It is now quite clear that these people had been sent away with the intention of killing them and that now they are no longer alive.

Weeks passed by but we couldn't stop thinking about the the victims torn from us. Naturally the German authorities inherited the few possessions left behind in their dwellings. The vacant apartments were completely cleaned out.

[HERE INSERT PLAN OF SOBIBOR DEATH CAMP WITH FOLLOWING CAPTIONS]

Plan of the Sobibor Death Camp.

I, II, III triple barbed wire fences

IV. Water trench--moat.

V. Mine fields

(From the archives of the Central Historical Commission in Munich).

On the Eve of the Second Resettlement

And so ended the painful month of June. July passed by quietly for the most part. It was only at the end of the month that news came to us about the initial resettlement action in Warsaw.

We here already know where the Jews will be resettled. We even know about a new slaughter place for Jews; its name is "Treblinka." We heard that the action in Warsaw was a bloody one with no lack of victims.

Just how uninformed the Jewish population of Warsaw is about where they will be taken is demonstrated by postcard sent by a Jew from Warsaw to Biala resident, Aharon Fruchtman, in which it was said with regard to the resettlement actions that one should keep his head up [???], dress well and take money.

The struggle in Warsaw, the center and heart of Polish Jewry, points quite clearly the kind of situation into which we have fallen. It is clear that the executioners have begun a program of complete annihilation. We see well that our situation is hopeless [?--oyszikhtloz], but we do not possess the means to save ourselves and we are condemned to death.

We have heard nothing from Lodz, where we have a close relative. We know only that the Jews there live in a sealed ghetto and wear yellow patches on their chests and shoulders, marked with a black Magen-David and the word, "Jude." There is supposed to be an actual "Jewish kingdom" there, which even has special Jewish money. The once-upon-a-time Eldest of the Orphans ["Eldest of the Jews"??], Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski is so far consumed by his megalomania that he plays the role of a "Jewish king" who rules everywhere and reigns over the depressed Jews with an iron hand.

[HERE INSERT PICTURE OF GHETTO MONEY FROM LODZ WITH FOLLOWING CAPTION:]

"Jewish" banknotes and coins used in the Lodz ghetto.

The month of August was especially tragic for our family. Generally speaking, this month brought with it a fatal change for the Jews of Biala. In fact, the fate of all Jews in Biala County was sealed that month.

On Monday, August 3rd (20 Av) in the afternoon, my brother-in-law was suddenly arrested at County Headquarters. This news had a strong impact in the

town, because every one knew he was a real [eingeyer?] and had substantial connections in the person of chief engineer Debus. This was, by the way, against the wishes of our family who warned him of the consequences of fraternizing with the bitter murderers. It is difficult to control the excited fantasies and foolish ambitions of a young man who wants to show for the sake of it that he has access to the barbarians and that he can accomplish something with him.

Soon his sister and his wife (my sister) were also arrested. The Sonderdienst, directed by him, conducted a search of his home which produced no suspicious results. My two sisters, who were present during the search, were also held. The dwelling was sealed. Only the key to my room was turned over to the Jewish Police and I received it right back. When I entered my room, everything was in disarray. It seemed that foreign hands had been involved [?]

I started trying to find out something, but without success. Noone wanted to say anything, rather they all said calmly that it must have been a misunderstanding, which would soon be cleared up. Meanwhile Menahem Finkelstein, a member of the Assistance Committee (and an active leftist in Poalei-Zion), was also arrested by County Headquarters. Finkelstein, like my brother-in-law, was also a frequent visitor to Headquarters.

The hours ticked off the clock. It was 7:00 p.m. just before Jews were subject to curfew. Our family had to return home with mixed feelings of fear and hope.

About 9:00 in the evening someone from my wife's family arrived suddenly at our home and insisted that we leave the house immediately. We were not told what had happened. We did not want to budge, but since they had put it so strongly, we left the house. My wife, baby daughter and I went over to my brother's in-laws' home and our cousin went off to a neighbor's.

Our arrival at my brother's did not arouse any great alarm. It turned out that they too knew something. We did not discuss it with one another, but the silence was suffocating. We sat there frozen, shuttering at the misfortune which had overtaken us so suddenly.

We went to sleep without getting undressed. I lay and sat on the ottoman, unable to sleep. I would be awake when the knock on the door would finally come. My thoughts turned to my devoted sister, then to my parents who were now also having the same feverish thoughts as myself.

About half the night I heard heavy military steps out in the street-- marching back and forth. Just as the dawn was breaking outside, our neighbor, Moshe Rodzinek, came downstairs and informed me that the street was surrounded with S.S. I did not dare ask what that was supposed to mean.

It was not long before we found out that they were searching the houses to round up men and that there were already many standing at the end of our street, Grabanower.

Now what will happen? Our already shot nerves could not stand it any more. We kept debating whether to hide ourselves and not go out. I made it clear that I was not going to hide. When they got close to us, shouting wildly, "Men outside!" I said goodbye to my wife and little daughter with a bitter [farklemter] heart. Like a madman I left the house.

The street was already full with Jewish men. There were a few stragglers running late who were being beaten severely the whole way with rifle butts.

There was much commotion on the streets [farshtoybte?]: gendarmes, S.S., Polish police, Gestapo and a few soldiers -- airforce. They were all armed with machine guns and grenades. What did they want to do with us? What was all the hardware for? I was indifferent to the whole show.

In a few minutes we learned that the purpose of the action was to determine which Jews were not working. The inspection lasted several hours and all the Jews were released. Naturally many Jews returned home bloody and beaten.

That morning cost the Jewish population 19 victims. 19 human lives were snuffed out that beautiful summer morning. Among the martyrs were: our housemate [roommate?], Zalman Liwerant, Yokel Listgarten and the former prisoner-of-war, the bookkeeper Friedman from east Kressen [?]. Fresh sadness in the Jewish houses and a fresh mass grave at the cemetery. This action was lead by the Gestapo man Paisker. The Ethnic German Gendarme Leon Busch distinguished himself as being especially bloodthirsty.

When we came back from the inspection, I heard that a man from Headquarters had been alone with my brother-in-law in his house and that my room was confiscated by his order. I, too, no longer had a place to live.

Each minute it became clearer that we had lost our dear ones after yesterday. They were shot to death in the evening probably somewhere in a field on Warsaw Boulevard. In one blow my sister had lost three loved ones. I cannot open my eyes. A deathly silence pervaded my parents' room. There was a heavy sadness in every corner. We sat dumbfounded and shaken in sorrow. My mother asked why there wasn't there something that could be done. My father and I glanced at each other and kept quiet.

A little later, after my mother had left the room, my father erupted in a heartrending wail for our friend, Yitzhak Shor. I tried to console my father, telling

him: "Do you see, father, what times we are living in? Fate, as it turns out, has willed that we too should lose our dear ones."

"Anyhow, it's possible that my son-in-law," my father said, "was guilty in their eyes of something, although everyone knows that our family was against maintaining ties with German personalities and we did not try to profit from his connections. But why were my three children taken from this world? Why!? Why!?"

[HERE INSERT PHOTOGRAPH OF YOSEL'S SISTER PESSELE]

Caption: "My sister Pessele."

My mother could tell from our behavior that she had lost her flesh and blood. She asked nothing more--she only cried and cried, until she had no more tears. She sat there [eingenoret] beside herself, her eyes transfixed, her face covered with wrinkles, aged, she seemed petrified. She would not even take a drop of water.

The whole town tried to console her, but everyone failed. Since the blow was so gruesome and so close to home, words of solace could not heal the fresh, bloody wound.

The death of my youngest sister, Pessele, evoked the greatest sadness, even from strangers. She was hardly 19 years old. Capable and gifted, an exceptional housewife, a first class businesswoman. She was everywhere and still had time to visit the old age home frequently and take care of the old patients, taking food for the poor and homeless.

In the middle of the night I heard my mother weeping on the sofa and my father's miserable groaning. My heart felt as if would split from misery. What did they want from us?

Later we learned that we had lost our three dear ones due to an intrigue by Headquarters officer, Neulinger von Passau.

The events in Biala began to occur now especially rapidly.

On Friday August 7 (24 Av) the Jewish Council suddenly announced that all Jews had to move themselves into a small ghetto by 6:00 p.m. the next day as it had been projected earlier. This had been ordered by the German authorities.

The Jewish residence quarter, which was currently located between: Grabanower and the Shul-Hoyf streets (with exception of a few houses at the New Market); Yanever Street (the right side only), Proste (from the courthouse on) and Cementarne Street, was from now on to be restricted to a four-sided box between: Grabanower (without the Shul streets) (from Wolnoszci Square to Proste St.), Proste,

the left side only (from Grabanower to Pszechodnie St.), Yanever, the right side only (to Pszechodnie) and Pszechodnie St, the right side only (from Yanever to Proste Streets).

It was if we were being strangled. There is also a terrible shortage of houses, although the ghetto was not yet sealed in. People were already living in stables, where were they supposed to go now? We began moving our possessions; everyone wanted to snatch a little corner somewhere.

The Jewish Council turned to Sicherheitsdienst chairman, Glaett, who said he would try to have the order rescinded and in fact it was soon repealed.

In a conversation between him and the chairman of the Jewish Council, Y. A. Rosenbojm, it was picked up that other measures were planned against the Jews. Just what he had in mind by "other measures" could not be gleaned at that meeting, but time would soon lift the veil.

On Monday August 10 (27 Av) a rumor spread that freight cars were waiting at the train station, in which 400 men from Biala were to be taken away to Lublin. That the cars were waiting at the station was confirmed when they started telephoning all the government offices from the station where were the Jews who were supposed to depart. Everywhere the answer was the same: we know from nothing.

On Wednesday August 12 (29 Av) several of our friends dropped by before dawn. They wondered why we were still sleeping and why we knew nothing about the round up which was taking place for men in the ghetto. They came to our place to hide out because our house was located in the christian zone. If the entrance to the flat had been closed from the Jewish side, they would not have come to see us.

We got dressed quickly, sat and waited for something to happen. A short while later we heard our friends wives shouting for us to open up. We opened the door and found out that the round-up had ended and that the men had been lead away to Wolye, a suburb of Biala. The action was lead by a new Schutzpoliceman and Ukrainian militia.

Among the detained men were a number of workers from the Wehrmacht and Reich German workshops. Attempts were made to free these men. A petition was made on their behalf to the chairman of the Sicherheitsdienst, Wide as a result of which all the men were released.

[HERE INSERT A MAP OF BIALA SHOWING THE JEWISH QUARTER]

Caption: Plan of Biala (a part of the city with the Jewish Quarter). (Obtained from the Magistrat after the liberation).

[HERE INSERT DOCUMENT 4]

Caption: "Document 4. Preparations for the Extermination of the Jews of the Biala (translation at page ____).
(Taken from the Magistrat archives after the liberation)"

It was not long before we heard from the men who had just been released that some of the men had been arrested again on the way. At the same time an order was issued by Headquarters that the Jewish Council, Assistance Committee, the Jewish Police and the Disinfection Brigade all had to appear at the square in front of Headquarters to hear an announcement from the chief.

There was a slight panic in the ghetto, nerves were tense. The above-mentioned reported to the square. Lieutenant Lipkow came out and told the women of the Welfare Committee and the Disinfection Brigade to go home. He then disappeared. The assembled waited maybe half an hour and still no one from authorities appeared. Then a truck arrived with unfamiliar S.S. men and couple of Ukrainians. The Jews were loaded into the truck and driven off to the train station.

This news was brought to us by Miss Malkah Kashtenbojm who had been released from the square by the Headquarters. With the departure of the Jewish Council it then became clear to us that the town was to be abandoned and that we had been condemned to resettlement. We were sure that there would soon be a round-up of the men, since there was a shortfall in the number who were supposed to have been conscripted in the morning round-up. In fact it wasn't long before the second round-up was under way.

About 9 o'clock in the evening the freight train pulled out in the direction of Lublin carrying approximately 400 Jews in the overfilled, tightly sealed freight cars, without even a piece of bread or a drop of water.

Back in the town there was confusion. [Di mer bahavnte zeyen?] To most of it seemed certain that we were approaching the final act of our tragedy.

It became clear that in the morning S.D. officer, Wide, had succeeded in freeing the Jews., because the outside commander of the action was not at the square. However, as soon as the new S.S. man arrived at the assembly point and realized that the Jews had been released, he ordered that the Jews be brought back and put under arrest. The new commander of the action also made a couple of visits to the Nazi offices and, as it turned out, was authorized to complete the round-up. In fact, he did not meet any resistance, to the contrary, there was enthusiastic support [translation?].

As it turned out other measures concerning the Jews were taken by S.D. officer Glaett during the above-mentioned events. First, the members of the Jewish Council were dismissed, from which body the Nazis had already received many "gifts"

[bribes?] and with which there was actually quite a civil relationship at the time of the action. The members of the Welfare Committee and other institutions suffered the same fate [lit. were dragged the same path?].

As night fell after that bloody and nightmarish day, an unfortunate Jew with a battered head, lay in the gutter on Narutowitsche Street; in a little ghetto room lay Mrs. Bracha Adlerstein (Moshe Shenker's daughter-in-law) who had been raped and shot to death by a Ukrainian participant in the action. Near the dead young mother stood her little four-year old daughter, [gerissen?] and shouting "Mommy, mommy, wake up!"

The misfortune that had befallen our family was even greater. Among the 400 deported Jews were my mother's brother, Y.A. Rosenbojm, the chairman of the Jewish Council, who would be missed most by the town, since it had lost its most capable and active representative. He had more than once been beaten by the Nazis for his proud demeanor toward them.

The nightmare, which oppressed our hearts, was unbearable. On Friday, because of all that happened my wife was seriously affected by our tragedy, she fell ill and I took her along with our little daughter away to Mezritch (Miedrezec) to stay with her parents.

When I came back Sunday to Biala, I heard that the Germans had already formed a new Jewish Council with eight inept Jews. Eliezer Zelniker was the chairman.

I heard also that the distinguished Glicke Lichtenbojm (Leibe Mednik's daughter) had been arrested and shot to death by the murderer Baldiga.

A member (representative?) of Hashomer Hatzair in Biala, Nodia Shteinman (youngest daughter of the well-known Hebrew teacher Ya'akov Shteinman) was arrested in August. It was said that this intelligent girl had gotten involved with illegal activities; that specifically she used to meet agents of the movement in her home. She fell into the Gestapo's hands as a result of the arrest of a Polish railway worker who was detained at the station carrying illegal literature. He then gave them her name and address.

Nodia Steinman spent a very short time in the basement of the Gestapo prison in Raabe's factory. It turns out that the skilled murderers had convinced themselves that they would not get anything out of the physically weak child and did not expect her to withstand the tortures to which she was subjected. We learned from the Jewish tailors who worked for the Gestapo how terribly she had suffered. We also found out from them that the Germans had driven Nodia Steinman away in a car in an unknown direction and had shot her to death.

Every evening a panic was caused in the ghetto on account of the rumors that there would be another round-up of men at night. Everyone went away to sleep at his workplace, leaving his wife and children to fare as best they could. How defenseless were these women who could not let their husbands stay overnight at home, but had to chase them out to sleep at their place of work, because each wife quaked with fear over the fate of her husband. Meanwhile, no round-ups took place.

Nevertheless, the end drew near: the military authorities explained to their Jewish workers that whoever wanted to work for them had to bunk down with them, that is to sleep in barracks under armed guard. At the Wehrmacht factory they began to give the Jews something to eat. The workers did not want to lose their jobs and thus were forced into moving to the barracks. Every evening we used to see this scene: workers came home from work for a little while and then they were standing in military formation in the Shul Hoyf whence they were marched away to the barracks. Whoever got a yen to sleep over at his own house for a night, got forty stripes the next morning on this body. Only on Sundays were the workers released from the camps so that they could be with their families.

In the meantime one of the 400 deported Jews, the former prisoner of war, Grossman, came running back to Biala. A whole new picture of the tragedy developed from his story.

It was established that the 400 men had been taken to the death camp at Maidanek, several kilometers outside of Lublin. There they were dressed in death clothes. But soon afterward an order was issued requiring them to give these clothes back. Officials had selected about 350 men from the Bialan group to work on the construction of a new rail line in Golomb, between Demblin and Pulow in the District of Lublin. There were left 50 men at the death camp, mostly elderly people. Among them were:

Y.A. Rosenbojm, Moshe Rodzinek, Yitzhak Fizhitz, Moshe Chayim Wiesenfeld, Yisroel Bialer, Shmuel Kreiselman, Yaakov Shlomo Zaidman, Yaakov Welvel Hersherberg (fireman), Englander, Chanan Weisberg, Berl Goldberg (the pharmacist) and others.

One can get an idea about what it was like at the camp from the comment that a man feels fortunate there to get a bullet in his head. They don't shoot people there. Rather they let them live in such terrible conditions that they drop dead off their feet. When one is barely breathing, they throw him into a wheelbarrow and carry him off to the ovens to be burned.

The work at Golomb was carried out in the most unbearable conditions. Heavy labor with little to eat and that is terrible. They shoot people at the slightest sign of weakness. There already more than enough victims there, like Fishel Cantor, Eliezer Lerner and Blumenkrantz (Y. Listgarten's son-in-law). We have endeavored to persuade the German headmen to bring back the members of the Jewish Council. They agree but don't really listen.

At the end of the tragic month of August there was terrible news about resettlements from all quarters. Today Biala's Jews know quite well that resettlement means nothing but death.

[HERE INSERT PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MAIDANEK CREMATORIUM WITH THE CAPTION: "Maidanek, the Crematorium. Archives of the Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland."]

In nearby Mezritch (Miedrezec) a bloody resettlement action took place on August 25th, during which I lost my light, my precious companion for life, my never-to-be forgotten wife and little daughter and my wife's family. This was a devastating blow for me, from which I shall never recover.

We tried to console ourselves by thinking that Biala meant nothing. Had not we surely given our share of victims--what more could they demand from us? This logic meant nothing to the blood-thirsty overlords. They showed themselves to be even more cynical and assured the Jewish Council that Biala Jews were not in danger.

Right before Rosh Hashana almost all the Biala Jews came back from Golomb. A certain number was missing. Those who did not return remained together in a common grave.

On Friday September 18th (7 Tishrei 5703) my wife's grandfather (Yehuda Leib Winograd) was buried. There were only a few people at the cemetery, since at that time it was already dangerous for Jews to go to the cemetery which was located outside of town. The murderers used to shoot any Jew they found there. I have a bizarre recollection of that funeral. Those who had gathered were almost wishing mazal tov to the family of the deceased, who had had the great privilege of dying a natural death in his own bed and who had come to his Jewish grave, like it used to be in the good times. Everyone assumed that the deceased would be one of the last of the dead to have this honor. I noted several elderly people actually looking with envy at the corpse in the grave. I had the impression that these people would have gladly switched places with the dead man.

On Shabbat Tshuva, September 19th the Jewish Councils of Biala, Yanewe and Konstantin were ordered to report to S.D. chief, Glaett.

By the day of Shabbat we already knew the results of that visit: the Biala Jewish Council was ordered to collect several kilograms of gold and to deliver it to the S.D. The demand was justified on the grounds that it was a sign of gratitude to the S.D. for having been able to defend the Jews of Biala with the higher authorities. The

Jewish Councils of Yanewe and Konstantin were notified that the Jews in their towns had until the 25th of September to leave their villages and move to Biala.

The Biala Jews joked ironically: "Finally we are a town with the right people[mit laytn gleich-translation?]." Whenever they demanded gold from the Jews, a resettlement was soon to follow. We had the feeling that we were all falling into the abyss, and unfortunately for us there was no hope in sight.

Noone wanted to give such bitter news to the Jews from Yanewe and Konstantin on Erev Yom Kippur. So the Jewish councils in those towns were spreading the idea that just maybe the Jews there would have a stroke of luck, just as the Biala Jews did during their first resettlement action.

The heads of the Jewish councils from the two towns came to Biala after Yom Kippur and commenced an effort to have the decree rescinded, but they quickly were convinced that the task was useless. This time the Germans were bloody earnest. The leaders went back to their home towns to notify the population that they would have to get ready to go.

About Tuesday, September 22, S.D chief, Glaett, sent for the wives of ex-Jewish Council members, Fizhitz and Rosenbojm, who had made persistent attempts to have their husbands brought back from the death camp.

When they arrived at Glaett's, they met the head of the Jewish Council, Eliezer Zelnicker. In his presence, Glaett asked the women how much their husbands were worth to them, because there was a chance that they could be bought out. The women answered that their husbands were very precious to them, but unfortunately they had very little money. The women tried to talk about all the Biala Jews were located at Maidanek, but he did not want to hear about it. He had it in mind to save only the two men. After a long petition from the women, he agreed to work to liberate the members of the Judenrat, Welfare Committee and Disinfection Squad. The women promised to deliver to him the sum of 45,000 zlotys. He stressed that the money had to be delivered to him as quickly as possible, because on Saturday or Sunday we was probably leaving for Lublin. He wanted to take with him the gold collected by the Jewish Council and wanted to try to secure the release of the persons in questions. He also noted that everything had to be kept perfectly secret. If any of this were to leak out, they would be responsible with their lives.

The two women came to me for advice. I told them that I was afraid this whole thing smelled like a provocation. They replied that the notice had been given in the presence of the head of the Jewish Council and they believed in Glaett's promise. So it turns out that with a price of 3,000 zlotys for each victim, we were taking the chance (rolling the dice) that maybe the people would be saved from the death camp.

It was decided that the families of the 13 other persons should only be told that there is glimmer of hope that the people would be saved., but that they would have to put up 3,000 zlotys. No more details can be given.

About Wednesday the first signs of the Jews from Yanewe adn Konstantin appeared. Carts laden with belongings were pulled in. It had been difficult for these Jews to leave the towns where they been born and where they had made their homes, where they were deeply rooted only to take up the wanderer's staff; it was hard to leave behind the little things from home that had been acquired with so much effort and hardship over the years.

I stood and looked on the fully loaded wagons and asked myself: "Don't these people know where this road is taking them? For what are they dragging all this luggage, these packages? Don't they sense the wings of death fluttering above their heads?" Many of them probably do know just what I do, but everyone wants to wipe such thoughts out of his mind.

Until Thursday evening the wagons were pulled into town loaded with Jewish possessions, upon which people were sitting, people who had already been designated as victims for the death factory in Treblinka.

Only a small group of Jewish workers at the "Wigoda" (horse breeding farm) were left in Yanewe.

Some of the 3000 Jewish arrivals lodged with friends and acquaintances. Those who had nowhere to go stayed for the moment on the street with their baggage; the weather was still rather nice.

Thursday evening saw the visit to the ghetto of the refined murderer, Glaett. He agreed to provide shelter for the newcomers. In the meantime he directed the baker, Yitzhak Preter, to distribute the bread he had in his bakery to the new arrivals who found themselves on the street. He promised to replace the baker's flour on Monday.

At the square he noticed the women, Boltshe Pizhitz and Chaya Rosenbojm, who had been waiting the whole day to deliver the money he had demanded. He called for them to come to his office at about 7 o'clock in the evening.

The Jewish Council had already had to turn over the gold they had collected. Whether the S.S. was contented with the quantity delivered (about 2 kilograms of gold) was difficult to know.

About 7 o'clock in the evening the women arrived at the S.S. office together with 45,000 zlotys. They were welcomed politely and asked to sit down. S.S. officer Wide counted the money twice. Glaett explained to them again that on either Shabbat or Sunday he would be in Lublin and would bring back with the 15 men according to the list which the women had given him. Since it was after 7 o'clock and Jews were

forbidden to be on the street, they were given a special pass which allowed them to move about freely.

What were the Bialer Jews thinking the next day?

Rumors were spread by Headquarters that nothing was in store for the Jews of Biala. Only the newcomers from the small villages were to be resettled. This was confirmed by the spokesman, Lipkow and his wife, when they were with the seamstress, Leah Kramazh. Most Biala Jews believed on the basis of these rumors, that a resettlement of the newly arrived Jews was being arranged, which would sweep not a few Bial Jews away with it. In the face of this prospect, there was a possible way out, however, that we had learned from the first Biala resettlement and from the experience of Mezritch: hide. As a result, the construction of hiding places going ahead at full blast. Money was no obstacle for this purpose. A hiding place was built in every house.

The Labor Office ordered those newcomers from the villages who were capable of work to be given a place to work, since this proved to be a salvation at the time of the first Biala resettlement. Noone spared any amount of money to get a work card. Many of them did therefore succeed in finding a job.

Friday, the eve of Sukkot. The ghetto was all a bustle as it was once in the good times before a festival, but what a difference between now and then. Everyone was living in a bitter nightmare. You could actually feel the impending doom. We were already at the abyss, into which we were staring helplessly.

The panic intensified when various officials seized half-completed work from the Jewish manual laborers. Headquarters captain, Kiehl^o, even tried to quell the panic by giving the work back to the tailors, the brothers Klotz, as did other officials, but the Jews were wise to the trick.

A member of the Jewish Council, Feivel Sitner (Mendel Weissman's son-in-law) assured me that the action had been postponed to a another deadline. I answered him simply: "That great for those who believe it!"

For a whole day the Jewish Councils of Yanewe and Konstantin collected the gold demanded by S.S. officer Glaett. It was delivered to him that evening.

During the day the workers from a number of workplaces came to pick up their things since they would be forced to stay in the barracks. We heard there would be seven camps of Jews:

1. At the firm, StuAG; 2. at the firm, Zid; 3. at the East Railway; 4. at the water works-inspection station (the only place where there were women as well); 5. at the airfield; 6. at the military bakery; and 7. the largest camp would be at the

^o Shot at the end of 1942 by a Jewish partisan group, which had operated for a short time in the forest under the leadership of Ziele Gutenberg (a cabinet-maker).

Wehrmacht [German Army], where the Jewish workers from private firms who had been authorized to employ Jews would also eat and sleep.

The workplace, where I was registered and where my whole family worked, was a carpentry workshop owned by the Ethnic German Benedict Kraskowski, who had not received permission to hire Jews.

At home we had prepared a small but very good hiding place for four persons. Because my mother had pressed her demand to sleep over at our place at night, my cousin and I decided to sleep at our workplace where two hiding places had also been readied.

Meanwhile, we learned that the director of the action, S.S. officer, Glaett, had left for the villages of Slawaticz, Kodnia, Piszczaz, Chotilow, Terespol, Wisznic and Rososz, where there were still some Jews. We surmised that he had gone there to order the Jews to transfer to Biala. We started to believe that perhaps the deadline for the bloody spectacle would be further postponed.

The hours passed as the Jews made the last preparations for going into hiding. We forgot that it was a holiday, since it was an unparalleled struggle for life itself.

Just before seven o'clock in the evening I left my heartbroken parents. With tear-filled eyes we said good-bye and wished that we would see each other again soon.

The streets of the ghetto were now empty. A deathly silence filled every corner. Only a few Jews could be seen scrambling about, running for someplace to hide. I noticed the tailors, Nachman Zuberger and Ahron Wolkowski who worked at the Gestapo. They told me that they had been assured at the Gestapo that nothing was going to happen to the Jews. But if there would be an action, the entire Biala district would be "Judenrein."⁰

It was a rare beautiful autumn evening. The sun illuminated the western sky with a fiery redness. "You see," said the Jewish policeman, Asher Rosenzweig, "the sun that is setting so magnificently despite everything--is setting in Biala for us Jews for the last time."

Saddened I slipped into the workshop which was located outside but nevertheless close to the ghetto (in the Gerer Hasidim shtibel). There I met all the workers with the wives and children. There were 18 men and 11 women and children. We decided that the women and children would take the more comfortable hiding place while the men would stand guard.

At night we all went out into the yard and tried to catch an echo or a sound from the ghetto--but there was only silence, like that of a cemetery.

⁰ That is, "free of Jews."

The Jews were divided into three groups: those in the barracks; a second group that had hidden away, a small percentage of whom had hidden out with christians. There was also a small group of men who had gone into hiding, even though they had been assigned to the barracks, since they did not want to leave their dear ones, desiring to share their fate. The third category consisted of those Jews who had no place to hide or who did not want to hide out and were ready for anything.

We sat and tried to guess what the night would bring--whether the expected events would occur, or whether perhaps tomorrow the Jews would be able to celebrate the holiday, although there would be little joy here.

[HERE INSERT GROUP PHOTOGRAPH WITH THE FOLLOWING CAPTION:

"Biala. The Ethnic German, Benedict Kraskowski (first row left) with his Jewish workers. Standing from the left in the middle row: Vovtshe Rosenbojm (my cousin from Lodz), Usher Fajgenbojm (my father); Moshe Fajgenbojm (my cousin); Shimshon Yustman, Yosef Edelman, Shlomo Zucker, Itshe Kanyer (from Serotsk), Yakov Brodatsch, Chaim Zawlmilbojm, Ziele Fajgenbojm (my uncle), Beryl Shneiderman, Moshe Lichtenbojm. Sitting in the front from the right: Frey (Grodna), Yehoshua Fajgenbojm (my brother). In the rear, standing from the right: Shulman (east Kressen) and Ziele Gutenberg."]

The Second and Final Resettlement

Suddenly about 4:30 in the morning in my sleep I heard gunfire. I tore out of the workshop where I had been sleeping and woke everyone up. Yosef Edelman also confirmed having heard the shots. It was clear that the bloody events had begun. Outside it was already light. We decided to get rid of the beds quickly and get into our hiding places.

We were sitting in the hiding places for not more than half an hour when the air had already become unbearable. Several of the weaker ones had to get out. They went on to the floor to get a little fresh air.

Soon our employer came in and confirmed that the action had started. Biala County would soon be Judenrein and the Jews were being taken away to Mezritch.

The bitter news devastated us. We knew that in a short while we would be homeless, until Treblinka took us in. In the best case would end up in a slave labor camp.

We lay in the hiding places and heard steps and a conversation in German. Yes, we recognized the voice well. It was none other than the director of the action, S.S. officer, Glaett. He was actually standing right over our heads, as our hiding place was located in a hole under the floor. He asked whether there were any Jews here. "I am talking to you," we heard him say as he spoke to our boss, "as I would with a German. If you are lying to me, you know what will happen." Our boss answered that there were no Jews here at all. A miracle--given what was locked up beneath those floorboards--that Glaett had not looked carefully at our boss's face, because if he had done so with those keen eyes of his, he would quickly discovered the truth.

[HERE INSERT DOCUMENT FIVE WITH THE FOLLOWING CAPTION:

"Document 5. The Death Sentence for the Jews of Biala (translation page _____. On account of the poor language used in the document, it may be presumed that it was not written by a Pole). (Taken from the Municipal Archives after the Liberation)."]

[HERE INSERT DOCUMENT SIX WITH THE FOLLOWING CAPTION:

"Document 6. Biala. Prohibition against Non-Jews Entering the former Jewish Quarter (translation page _____. (Taken from the Municipal Archives after the Liberation)."]

A. At the Assembly Point and in the Streets

What was happening now in the ghetto?

As we later discovered, the resettlement action began a little before four o'clock in the morning. By the time we had heard the first shots, more than enough Jewish lives had been cut short.

The following took part in the action: the Gestapo, the S.S., the Gendarmes, the Polish Police and soldiers from the Luftwaffe, all of whom had surrounded the ghetto about 10:00 the night before.

Just as the dawn began to break outside, they began to chase people from their homes and drive them to the square at the Pig Market where they were commanded to sit on the ground.

In those homes where the residents did not open the door so quickly, the Germans broke it down. Like wild beasts they rushed in and beat the people inside mercilessly. Whoever had the desire to take aim with his gun and more victims fell. Sick people in bed who were not able to go to the assembly point were shot to death in their beds.

The tall, slender murderer, Glaett, ordered the Jewish policeman, Henech Bialer, to go into a Jewish home (at Chaim Gotlen's yard on Proste Street) to check and see if there were any Jews there. The Jewish policeman went inside where there were in fact Jews but notified the S.S. officer that no one was there. The vampire did not believe him. When he convinced himself that the Jew had tricked him, he flew into a wild rage. He pulled out his revolver and shot Bialer dead on the spot.

The Jews on the streets making their way to the assembly point were beaten savagely. More than one lay motionless in a pool of blood.

At the assembly point the despondent Jews sat cloaked in fear. Every minute another Jew was picked out because he did not meet the approval of the Inquisitors and taken a short distance off to the side where shots were heard and the man was seen collapsing. No distinction was made between men, women and children. Near the house of the Christian Szidlowski a long mass grave was dug.

[HERE INSERT PHOTOGRAPH OF PIG MARKET WITH CAPTION:

"Biala. The Pig Market. Assembly Point for the Jews during the Resettlement. (Photographed after the Liberation)"].

Jewish blood flowed in homes, in the streets and at the assembly point. Wherever one looked, there was a Jewish victim.

The sun began to rise over the city of slaughter and its bright, warm rays shone for the last time on the dead faces of the victims, before they would be thrown into the dark graves.

The most gruesome beasts: the S.S. officer, Petersohn, the so-called "Red Murderer" (on account of his red hair); the gendarme, Leon Busch and the commandant of the Polish Police Kuchazhewski, who had wanted to show that when it came to murdering Jews he would not, God forbid, take second place to a the pure Germans.

Some of those who had hidden out were soon discovered by the executioners. These people were taken out to the assembly point under a hail of blows. Several fell dead on the spot.

When enough Jews had been collected at the assembly point, a few people capable of working were selected for the camp at the airfield and sent off to Malaszewicz (formerly a Polish military airfield near Terespol). Each of those selected, albeit with a mournful heart, separated from his wife and children harboring the illusion that he had saved his own life.

Gruesome scenes were played out at the assembly point: women and children were beaten relentlessly and were shot at with impunity. The job of murder and punishment was in full swing. One had the impression that the outcome of the war and German victory depended precisely upon the battle here against these defenseless and helpless Jews.

At this point they brought the young man from Serotsk, Zishe Goldberg (a friend of the above-mentioned Godieh Shteinman), who had worked the whole time at the S.S., where they thought the best of him. A couple S.S. with the Red Murderer Petersohn got angry at him, because he had refused to let them steal something from the warehouse for which he was responsible. The tortures this young man had to undergo before he parted this "civilized world" are truly undescrivable. They beat him viciously with crowbars, then put out his eyes, hung him on a concrete fountain and beat him incessantly even more murderously, torturing him and abasing him.

The young man behaved courageously. He did not ask for mercy, only hurling these brave words in the face of his tormenters: "You are such heroes," he said, "against these defenseless Jews; but the world and the Jews as well will see what kind of heroes you will be when you will lose the war." This sent the Germans into a ferocious rage. The young man's soul expired in enormous suffering.

On the street the three Grodner sisters were hurrying to the assembly point with their little brother, when the red-haired S.S. officer arose before them and saw the youngest sister, a marvelously beautiful child, and called out: "It's a shame such a beautiful child should have to go to Mezritch. It would be better for her to stay here." A shot rang out, the child shuttered and fell with a groan to the stones. Yes, the child stayed, lying on the stones with a shattered head, warm blood flowing out.

The sisters and the little brother stopped petrified--they could fathom what had just transpired. Finally they comprehended that the murderer had slaughtered their little sister and broke out in a heart-rending weeping. The Red Murderer smiled, content with his little piece of work and drove the sisters and their little brother to the assembly point.

In the Jewish hospital, where there were 15 patients and 2 nurses, who did not want to leave the sick, the Gestapo murderers broke lead by the Gestapo man Harrenstein. They commanded the nurses, who listened astonished, to give the patients better food and left the hospital.

Those people who were sitting at the assembly point were ordered to turn over all their gold and jewelry. Anyone refusing to hand over these objects was threatened with death. Since they had figured that that they were to be sent to Treblinka, most of the Jews had not taken any baggage with them. They were to regret this decision, for the Jews were just loaded into wagons and sent to Mezritch.

The elderly and the children were loaded onto wagons, while the young people were set to race off to Mezritch on foot. Due to the large number of wagons, not all of which were occupied, the young people were also loaded onto the wagons.

The wagons pulled out, stuffed with Jews, depressed and full of fear. At the Biala County line, where the Woroniecer forest is located, many Jews were taken off the wagons and lead into the woods. This forest, too, was soaked with Jewish blood.

The Jews lying dead in the streets and in their homes, whence they were thrown from the windows, were assembled anew by the christians and taken away to the cemetery. After lying there exposed several days, they were eventually buried by christian municipal workers.

After the bloody day came the horror-filled night. The christians using the cover of darkness broke [transl.? balebateven} into the Jewish homes. They dragged

out whatever was left. They even stole the blood-drenched clothes off the dead, lying in the street.

Morning, Sunday, the second day of Sukkot (September 27). All the pure and ethnic Germans were invited into the ghetto, wearing their Sunday finery. They roamed throughout the ghetto looking for hidden Jews. At the same time they looted Jewish homes of the best and finest. In this regard, the following vampires distinguished themselves: Neulinger, Hempel, Lipkow, Roschinski--from Headquarters, Inspector of the Water Works Inspectorate, Engineer Gruenfeld and the Ethnic German, Rutkowski (Senior).

The director of the action had determined that a greater percentage of the Jews had not reported for deportation. Search dogs were brought in to discover the Jewish hiding places. A new day of bloody work began for the barbarians. Scenes of the first day were repeated. Jewish victims lay everywhere and blood ran like a river.

Headquarters took Jewish workers from the camps to start carrying out the property from the evacuated homes to the synagogue and house of study.

Where the Jewish workers came into a home, they shouted: "Men, come out!" and the men, who heard their call came out and attached themselves to the worker teams and in the evening returned with them to the camps. Also, whenever they had the possibility, the workers would advise the hidden Jews that Biala was Judenrein and they should leave for Mezritch at night.

At the Jewish hospital, the black visitors came a second time, going from bed to bed shooting the sick in their beds. The two or so patients who had had enough strength to get out of their beds and try to escape, got a bullet in the back. The two nurses who had not wanted to abandon their patients and cast their fate with the sick and were shot as well.

A hiding place was also discovered in the hospital. The Jews there were shot on the spot. Among them was the chairman of the Jewish Council, Eliezer Zelnicker.

[HERE INSERT PHOTOGRAPH OF VICTIMS AT CEMETARY WITH FOLLOWING CAPTION:

"Biala. The cemetery during the resettlement. (Obtained from the christian caretaker)"].

The Jews who were assembled at the assembly point again for the second day of the bloody action were also sent off to Mezritch. No workers from the workers camps were taken.

Wagons packed full with Jews rolled down Brisker and Lomazer Avenues. These carried the Jews from the remaining villages of Biala County: from Slawaticz, Kodnia, Piszczac, Terespol, Wisznic, and Rososz. The action was carried out by the local gendarmarie and the Polish Police under orders from S.S. officer, Glaett.

The wagons which went from Biala to Mezritch were full of Jewish dead. Whoever had a desire to do so could arrest a "wandering Jew" and turn him over into the hands of the murderers.

This is what happened to the three Grobman sisters on their way from Biala to Mezritch. They were arrested in the village of Stizhiniec by the wife of the headquarters chief, who called out for the Sonderdienst and ordered them to shoot the three sisters. In a short time, the bodies of the three sisters were lying in a pool of blood.

From Tuesday on, the fourth day after the bloody events, the shooting of Jews stopped. It seems that the Germans were rather tired of bathing themselves in Jewish blood. The Gestapo took over the ghetto from Headquarters. Notices were posted throughout the Jewish ghetto announcing that Jews would be able to travel to Mezritch without penalty until Thursday, October 1, 1942. Every Jew found in Biala County after the deadline would be shot.

In actual fact there were Jews in those days who were not shot. Either those who reported voluntarily to go to Mezritch or those who had pulled out of their hideouts--all were sent off to Mezritch.

The Gestapo selected 50 workers from among the people who had reported for the evacuation to clean out the houses in the ghetto. Included among them were two women, Matel Zucker (Froyim Zucker's wife) and Mashe Gelburd (Yosele Wohiner's daughter). Among the men were: Yitzhak Eckstein (the barber); Yitzhak Kahan and his son, Gedaliah, Hanina Kashemacher, Noah Rodzinek, Antschel Beckerman, the Beckerman brothers (Yosef Sanieh's sons), Shmuel Liberman (the knitwear maker from Siedlce), Baruch Fajgenbojm, Polosetski (a carpenter from Lomaz), David Geltman, Shlomo Zucker (Matel Zucker's son), Shimshon Yustman, Steingart (Mottel Ariyeh's son) and others.

The workers were placed in barracks in the Ghetto Square, where, from the beginning of the summer of 1942 to the resettlement, Jews lived who were regularly expelled from streets outside of the designated Jewish quarter. During the night the workers were let into one of the barracks in which all the doors and windows were boarded up. They were guarded there by the municipal firefighters until they were released for work early the next morning.

The first job of the workers was to [farklappen?] break into all the Jewish homes. Later they had to clean out all the homes and store everything in

warehouses whence the goods were shipped to Germany. A large part of the work was to dig graves right there in the Square for the Jewish victims.

No sooner had Thursday ended than they began shooting every Jew they came across. This time it was only the Gestapo, who had transformed the Ghetto Square (located on Pszechodnia Street between Yanewe and Wonska Streets (at Shabbtai's garden) into a cemetery.

Actually there was no difference whatsoever between the graveyard at the Ghetto Square and the official cemetery. At the latter the "Culture Bearers" carried out their vandalism; all the tombstones and grave monuments were shattered into little pieces and used for various purposes.

The 50 Jewish workers at the Gestapo witnessed their share of horrible scenes. Day after day Jews were brought into the barracks, for whom the workers had to prepare a mass grave. At dusk the victims were brought in pairs to the grave, clad only in their underclothing. There were two shots and the Jews disappeared from the surface having fallen into the pit. The remaining victims waiting back in the barracks for their turn heard the shots and watched the bloody scene looked through the cracks in the wall.

When the bloody work was done, the Jewish workers were called over to the pit to shovel dirt on the bodies. The gunman stood by and watched them carefully to see if they worked hard enough at burying their own brothers and sisters in the dark pit.

Sometimes when the day's quota of victims was small and the pit was not deep, the Jews were ordered to lie down in the grave where they were shot several times. There were times when the workers were filling in the pit that they heard groaning in the ground. Each spadeful of earth they cast into the pit evoked the most pitiful groaning. The leaders of the annihilation at the Ghetto Square were the Gestapo men Schmidt and Nording.

Then they brought Jewish Council member, David Kantor and his daughter, Sarah. He begged the Gestapo man, who had not received any bribes from him for a while, to let the two of them live, since they were both still young and could do a lot of work. The pleading did not help at all. A revolver bullet put an end to their life. Their bodies were thrown in a Ghetto yard (on Wonska Street) next to a dung heap.

Mrs. Sheindel Kornblum, who was brought here with her husband, Ya'akov, pleaded with them to spare her life; she was ready to give away her whole fortune. But the wild Gestapo man laughed cynically. There was a burst of machine-gun fire near the water pump (Shimele Hana Riwe's pump) and two stiffened bodies were left forever mute.

Mrs. Etel Richter quietly asked the Jewish workers not to tell her son about her tragic fate. He was at one of the Biala work camps. That same night they lead her out of the barracks in a nightgown and shot her to death.

Not a few workers watched as their own wives, children and relatives, who had been discovered in hiding places, were shot to death at the Ghetto Square. They stared stone-faced and silent. The victims too stood silently. If the Germans had the slightest indication that a relative was being shot it could one his life.

This is what happened to the worker, Hanina Kashemacher, whose wife Pearl was shot dead before his very eyes. The worker, Shmuel Lieberman buried his son's still writhing body in the dark pit. Noah Rodzinek survived the pain of his brother Avraham's destruction.

There was one case when they brought Yidel Zimbalist, a member of the Jewish Council, and his pregnant wife, Nehama (Moshe Shenker's daughter) to be shot. After considerable efforts by the workers, they succeeded in getting a Gestapo man to accept Zimbalist for work. While he was in the middle of work, a second Gestapo man noticed him and drove him back into the barracks where they were holding Jews for shooting. When the workers begged the Gestapo-man for mercy and asked that Zimbalist be allowed to return to work, he told them he could not do anything to help, since the Jew was here with his wife. "If he would stay and work, what would they do with the wife?" "They could not and were not allowed to separate husbands and wives." In fact, they were not separated and were thrown into the grave together. This how a people of culture acted, one had the image of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

There were also cases where arrested Jewish girls were forced to dance naked in front of the already prepared grave, into which they were shot dead afterwards.

The whole Ghetto Square along with the neighboring yards was transformed into a Jewish cemetery. Wherever you step you trod on Jewish graves.

[HERE INSERT THE PHOTOGRAPH OF GHETTO SQUARE WITH THE CAPTION:

"Biala. Ghetto Square (Shabbtai's Garden), where the mass executions at the time of the Resettlement took place. In the middle, Hanina Kashemacher's house, where the Jewish Gestapo workers used to live. (Photographed after the liberation.)"]

[HERE INSERT THE CLOSE UP PHOTOGRAPH OF GHETTO SQUARE WITH THE CAPTION:

"Biala. Ghetto Square. In the middle the barracks where the Jews were stuffed after they were thrown out of their homes. During the Resettlement, the Jewish Ghetto workers were stationed here. It was here that the arrested victims of the

Resettlement were held before being shot at dusk. At left, Mottel Mintz' house. (Photographed after the liberation)."]

B. In Hiding Places and Our Means of Survival

Our hiding places had been made in different places and only after we spent whole nights contemplating the possibilities. So we decided to put up walls in our basements which caused the basement to be divided into two halves. The other half of the basement was completely walled up and could be accessed by crawling into the space through a floor board that lifted up. Working in small groups [?] we [?] and made a secret entrance in the wall which was concealed by a bed. Different types of dens were built in attics and in stalls. It would be difficult to find anyone who could count all the places built by Jews in which to stuff themselves.

Almost all hiding places were very overcrowded and close, since at the at last minute people who needed a place to hide had to be let in for whom provisions had not been made. In hiding places located in attics, people actually had to lie naked on account of the terrible heat.

The children were a particular problem. At times when one had to lie perfectly still, they used to start to cry. But here too we found a solution: suckling infants were taken back into the house where after a while they endeavored [?] to get to their mother's breast--they were then shot to death by the Nazis who were coming into the houses looking for Jews. Some of the infants who were not taken back into the houses were suffocated to death in the hiding places lest they reveal the whereabouts of the hiding place by their crying.

The smaller children [tots?] were the biggest problem. They were constantly babbling with their little mouths. They did want to lie in the hiding places, but preferred, of course, to run outside in the streets in the warm sun. They did not stop crying. Such a child could not be left alone in the house, since he could betray the whereabouts of the hiding place. What were we supposed to do with these children? Were we supposed to sacrifice ten people's lives for the sake of one child? Where could we find a King Solomon in this place who could carry out his judgment? There were also cases where these children fell victim to suffocation. To be sure, in these instances the parents did not carry out the act, only strangers did. The parents just sat in a daze--one did not dare to cry. They could not help looking to the corner where their dead child lay, covered by a shroud.

The Jewish Gestapo workers later found dead children in Ghetto attics, cellars (like at Arke Weissman's house on Grabanower Street), in closets, in chests and in stalls (at the blacksmith's shop on Wonska Street, one was found under a washtub).

There was one hiding place where Mrs. Haya Rivka Berezovska (her maiden name, daughter of Shepsele Stoler) went into labor. Because of her screaming she

met the same fate as the above-mentioned children-- she was strangled to death (in Chayim Becker's house on Proste Street).

It was also terrible for the older children. They bombarded us with a flood of questions. One such child in a hiding place noticed christian children playing on the street. Now go and try to explain why the others are able to go outside and play while Jewish children had to lie here in hiding. Go try to explain to him a story about race theory. My cousin (Zile the carpenter or Zile Stoler's son)'s child, a little boy of about 5 years old, who could hardly catch his breath in the hiding place, cried out to his father: "I will not lie here any more! Call a German over here and tell him to shoot me!"

For a little while food and water were brought into the hiding places, but how long could one lie there like this? The Polish Fire Brigades were especially helpful to the Germans in discovering hiding places, a task which they performed with particular zeal. They even ripped the roofs off houses when they suspected that there was a hiding place in the attic.

On the first day of the blood bath we were lying in the hiding place and had no idea that Biala County was becoming Judenrein. We only heard the shooting and understood that Jewish lives were being wiped out. On the second day, we learned from the Jewish workers who were cleaning out the Ghetto, that we had to move to Mezritch and that staying in the hiding places any longer was useless. The news spread quickly among the Jews in the hide-outs and by evening everyone decided to go to Mezritch.

In many hiding places, however, Jews lay for many days without knowing what was happening in the streets. If one risked going out to find out something, in most cases he never made it back. He would be arrested and shot.

There were some who stay hidden for weeks in holes. Finally, they could hold out any longer. Resigned to their fate, they simply walked out into the streets. Wanting nothing more but to see a little of God's world, they descended into the dark pit -- this time standing up.

We heard of places where people lay hidden for months. People stayed in an attic hiding place at Chaim Becker's house until mid-January 1943 -- more than three and one-half months. When the ghetto workers finally noticed them, the people were in a frightful condition. It was a good hiding place, outfitted with bedding--not so cold and there was sufficient food for the entire time. They got hold of an oven that even had some Cholent which had been in the house from the eve of Sukkot. They had a problem, however, with water. When once they noticed some ghetto workers carrying water outside the hiding place, they called for them to bring some. By nightfall the workers brought enough water and food as well. When the workers asked them why they hadn't left

for Mezritch, they answered that wanted to stay here through the New Year, in the hope that there would be a change in the situation for the Jews.

Not able to wait any longer for the hoped for change, they left the hiding place a few weeks later. One by one they left for Mezritch. Only one made it, however: the young man, Eckerman (Sheyme Schneider's son-in-law). The rest met death on the way.

Several dead Jews were found in a second hiding place in March 1943. It was difficult to determine the reason for their death (in an attic at the home of M. I. Biederman, on Yanever Street).

[HERE INSERT DOCUMENT 7 WITH THE CAPTION:

"Document 7. Biala. Order of the Diligent Mayor Engineer A. Walawski and his assistant W. Iwanicki regarding the arrest and handing over of Jews to the Gendarmes (Translation on Page _).
(Taken from the Municipal Archives after the Liberation)."].

[HERE INSERT DOCUMENT 8 WITH THE CAPTION:

"Document 8. Biala. Despite the order prohibiting entry into the Jewish Quarter, it was nevertheless looted. (Translation on Page _).
(Taken from the Municipal Archives after the Liberation)."].

The Jews, who hid out with christians, were also not able to stay very long. The christians were afraid to keep them, because doing so was punishable by death. One by one over the course of weeks, the Jews moved out to Mezritch. Jews who hid out in the villages and were almost all arrested and shot.

A negligible number of Biala Jews tried to save themselves by acquiring christian passports, the so-called "Identity Cards." But these were obtainable only with the greatest of difficulty. People had to pay legendary sums for these Identity Cards, and at every turn they were swindled and cheated by the christians. Even though they felt things were not entirely "kosher," the Jews had no choice but to let themselves be cheated. This took the last penny many of them had and when all was said and done they all were forced to come back to the Ghetto any way. It is known that some Biala Jews ended up somewhere with their Identity Cards: Michash Hoffer and his family; Berl Sandlazh, his wife and daughter, Bronye Fuchs, Gutshe

Slobodzka (Henech Goldfeder's daughter) and Leon Goldfarb. It is difficult to say anything about their fate.

Some young girls made attempts to be sent to work in Germany with the help of their connections, but to no avail. Women who set out travelling on the trains in order to be taken for work in Germany did not attain their goal. Without any documents and unable to prove who they were and where they came from, they soon discovered that rather than realizing their dream to be slave laborers, they found death instead. As we heard it, Dobe Altbier (Note Altbier's daughter) was among these victims.

One cannot really blame the christian population for not having wanted to hide Jews. We probably would not have been any better and would not have risked our necks either. But what can you say about those christians who took in rich Jews and when they had gotten their fortunes threw the Jews out onto the street? The baker, Yitzhak Fogel and his son had hid themselves somewhere with a christian in Blonye. One night the christian attacked them with an axe. Frightened by their screaming, the christian fled from the hiding place. The Jews got away with a couple of serious wounds and escaped to the ghetto at Mezritch.

A certain number of Jews, like the Appelbojm family from Yanewer Street, fled to the forests in the hope of joining the partisan bands that had been formed by escaped Russian prisoners of war. Here, too, they met with disappointment. The partisans took everything, leaving them naked and barefoot, and drove them away.

A few individuals made hiding places for themselves in the forest. Every night they would go out to a nearby peasant house and buy something to eat. But again the results were tragic. Either they were murdered by the christians or they were captured by the Germans and shot. This was the case with a bunker in the Holer Forest, where in the summer of 1943, the Schneiderman brothers (the sons of Rachel Leah, 14 Brisker Street), Hanan Tenenbojm (David Becker's son), Henekh Kahan (Yitzhak Kahan's son) and a young man from Mezritch were shot to death by gendarmes.

C. In the Camps.

When we were lying in the hiding place at our job, my brother, on the second day, got a letter to his brother-in-law, who was at the Wehrmacht Camp in Wolya, in the Wineta Nachschub Lager department. He wrote him that his brother-in-law should attempt to get us all taken in as cabinetmakers at the camp. These efforts were crowned with success. That night a car with a soldier came for us. The

married workers did not even have time to say good-bye to their wives and children. They asked our boss if he would try and get the women and children into the camp at the Water Works. He agreed.

As our car sped through the streets, we saw that the ghetto seemed dead, extinct. Christians looked curiously at our car. Finally we arrived at the Wineta camp, where there was great movement among the Jews assembled there. We recognized friends and acquaintances and were happy to see each other again. At the same time sadness covered everyone's face. Yes it was true that we had saved ourselves for the meantime, but what would happen to the women and children, many of whom were still lying in the hiding place while many had already gone to Mezritch.

The Germans lined us up, looked us over well and took our work papers. The small teenager, Yehoshua from Serotsk, who had been with us continuously at the workshop and had come with us here was not accepted into the camp. We tried everything to get him to be able to remain in the camp, but we could not work it out. We told him to go carefully back to the women in the workshop and whatever would happen to the women would happen to him. With tears in his eyes, the boy departed from us.

We washed ourselves well at last and drank some warm coffee. After lying two days in the hiding place, this was really refreshing for us. We noticed a few girls dressed as men in order to save themselves possibly. Among the girls, I recognized the daughter of Moshe Katz, the wagoner from Rososz.

Later the whole camp of Jews was marched from there in military order and under military guard to the main Wehrmacht camp located on Warsaw Avenue, behind the officers' quarters near the barracks of the 34th regiment [transl.?].

On the way to the main camp the old man, Berele Scheiderman, fell behind and could go no further. The guards allowed him to be taken to the camp at the Water works where he remained until that camp was resettled.

Just as we came to the camp, a car coming from the direction of Mezritch pulled up carrying S.S. Seeing a column of Jews, they simply could not sit still and started welcoming the Jews with rifle butts. Chaos ensued and everyone started running into the camps. It turned out that as a result of this welcome there were dozens of cracked skulls and a few were beaten to death.

In the main camp we met friends and acquaintances as well. We learned that there had been a Jewish funeral in the camp that day. After hearing that his wife and child had been resettled, the young man, Chaim Hoffer had hung himself.

Later in the camp at the airfield, the [rimer?] Yitzhak Winderbojm slit his own throat with a razor and suffered in agony for several hours until a bullet put an end to his life.

Two rows of wooden barracks illuminated by electric lights gave one the impression of an exhibition pavillion. In each barrack there were two rows of beds, between which the Jews were standing recounting the events of the last tragic days. The courtyard was illuminated and one could see that the camp was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. The camp was run by Stabzahlmeister Seemann, Oberzahlmeister Schilf and the "Oberjude" Sokolowski (a German Jew).

My brother and I were assigned to the same barrack, where our cousin, Izeh Rosenbojm was also staying.

I was worried constantly about what would happen to my parents and aunt in the hiding place. How would they be able to get out of there and where could the women go? It was up to me to try the next day to go into town with a soldier and take care of the matter.

On Monday September 28, about 7 o'clock in the morning, after coffee, there was an assembly of all the workers. They checked the number of workers and registered our group of cabinetmakers, to which I also belonged. The workers from the private companies, who were quartered in the camp, were lead away to their jobs by the Jewish Police, which was located here in the camp. In the evening when they returned from work, they got their evening ration of bread. They were given lunch at their places of work.

Several hundred workers were lead away by a military sentry to the Wineta camp, where they worked and got something to eat.

The remaining several hundred Jews worked and were fed at the central camp. Every morning soldiers would come from various military units to demand tradesmen or manual laborers and would receive their contingent of slaves.

Any monetary compensation for Jewish workers stopped the moment they crossed the threshold of the camp. For the slaves it was enough to get a bowl [menashke?] of soup.

The Stabzahlmeister told us that we, the group of cabinetmakers, would be sent temporarily to a nearby military post to do manual labor.

The soldier lead along Warsaw Avenue. On both sides peasants were working in the fields. What a beautiful golden Polish autumn day! On the avenue we noticed a few Jewish women and girls walking secretly to Mezritch.

At the camp there were Jewish boys who sneaked into the camp at night to sleep with their fathers and slipped out again before dawn. They wandered around a whole day on the avenue. Where were they supposed to go...isn't there any place in this world for these little innocent children to go?

At work I tried to get a soldier to help me with my plan to go into town, but it did not work out.

A day later our group was sent to the same work spot. When someone gave us a little cabinetry to do I told him that we needed tools. If he could give me a soldier to go with me to town, I would be able to bring the tools. He agreed and soon I was taken to town by a soldier wearing a revolver at his side.

So I began to implement my plan to save my parents and my aunt. I went and the soldier followed.

I entered the camp at the water works where my sister-in-law was staying with her family. There Fanya Friedberg, Sarah Finkelstein (Sarale Bachrach), Mrs. Tokarska and others recognized me. They stood there astonished--every one bombarded me with questions. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to chat. I asked my sister-in-law if she would try to get my mother and aunt into the camp, as I hoped to bring them there soon. I turned over a large sum of money to the Polish director of the camp who told me that my mother and aunt could come, they would be accepted.

Then I went to my former workshop to get some tools. I approached two polish carpenters [dorozhkars?] and asked if they would could take two women to the camp at the water works. I got this answer: "Jews--not for a million would we do it."

My former boss sold me some packs of cigarettes, which I gave to the soldier. I decided to deal "wa bank." [???]. I knew that if I did not make good use of this opportunity today, I would not be coming so quickly into town again. I knew that there was a rule in the camp aht Jews were not supposed to go into town with soldiers. Violators would be shot by the Gestapo.

As I crossed the street, I heard noises from the Ghetto. They were leading Jews out of a hiding place in house of the butcher, Moshe Goldstein on Tshasne Street. The Nazis were taking the Jews out with wild screaming and loud laughter, not economizing on beatings all the while. The Ghetto streets were empty. Everywhere you looked they were throwing pieces of furniture out of the windows onto the street.

I went into our yard which was located in the christian area on Brisker Street, I told the soldier to stay at the gate and I ran to the arbor [eltane?] where the hiding place was located. I shouted: "Father, come out here!" In about a second my father

and mother were standing in front of me. I told my father he was to go with me and my mother should follow behind.

We came out onto the street. The soldier took my father and I, while my mother hurried behind without an armband with the Star of David.

On the way, I learned that my aunt had left earlier in the day to go to a hiding place with her sister.

On the way, we met a number of the demons but they did not stop us. So we arrived at the camp at the water works where the gate was already opened and my mother was let inside. My father and I went to the military post where our group was at work. As we were walking along Warsaw Avenues, two autos sped by in the direction of Mezritch, carrying quite a few Jews from Biala. Seeing us, they began to cry uncontrollably.

I felt as if a great burden had been taken off my shoulders: my parents had been spared from a painful stay in the cramped, dark hiding place waiting for rescue. That night I learned that our aunt had also made it to the water works camp where she too was accepted. It felt good in a small way, that my efforts had been successful.

The next day I still had a bit of difficult work left for me: to legalize my father's presence in the camp. From Monday on they were not accepting any more workers into the camp. Every newly arrived Jew at the camp was arrested and turned over to the Gestapo which naturally shot him to death. After considerable efforts, I succeeded in taking care of the matter: my father could stay.

In nearly all the camps the Germans tried to engage the tradesmen in the specialty.

In the camp at the airfield, where the German firms, "Maier," "Benz" and "Sager Werner" were operating, manual laborers were used for different kinds of construction and excavation work. A large number of workers were engaged in loading beams for coal mines into railcars. At first the regime there was bearable, but later it became a dangerous place for Jews. Day after day, those workers too weak to work were tied with wire and thrown on a cart and turned over to the Gestapo in the Ghetto where they were shot to death.

In the camp at the water works the men were engaged in maintenance work while the women and children worked in the fields and gardens. The camp was administered by the German engineer Gruenefeld, who extorted all kinds of payments from the Jews without end. The situation there was tolerable. The camp was located by the river.

Jews in the German bakery were employed at various tasks. The camp was directed by the German, Hanack, who owned a great deal of Jewish property. On the average the small number of Jews there did not live all that badly. The camp was located in the mechanical bakery in Wolya.

In the camp at the "StuAG" company, located in the Holer Forest, the Jews were employed in roadwork. They were directed by German and Polish civilians. Their treatment was tolerable.

In the camp belonging to the German company, Zued, which did work for the S.S. and was under their supervision on Yanever Street, the Jews were engaged in construction and excavation work. Life there was unbearable. The German boss, Bittner, especially distinguished himself with his savagery.

The labor camp at the railway station belonged to the "Eastern Railroad". The Jews there worked loading and unloading freight cars and cleaning the tracks. The conditions there were mild.

Actually the work itself in all the camps was not especially hard for the Jews. It was rather the inhuman brutality that debased them, the force used had a terrible effect on them, much worse than the hardest physical labor. Food in the camps was meager. Everyone had to use the money he had brought with him to buy his own food, which was smuggled into the camps through a variety of means. The sanitary and hygienic conditions were miserable in nearly all the camps.

Each night workers sneaked out of the camps and tried to get back into the Ghetto. This was done in the early days to keep contact with the families in hiding. Later on they tried it to get into their old homes to bring back left over money as well as a few clothes.

People even risked coming back from and going to Mezritch to take care of various matters. Some of the workers from the camps visited their families in Mezritch and returned. Many Jews were killed along the way, especially those who went back to the Ghetto which was carefully watched by the Polish Fire Brigades who had their own large share of Jewish victims. Among these victims were: Paula Ribak, Avraham Orlansky's one and only son Isaac and his daughter, Rachel, Eizhe Rubenstein (May 1943), Moshele Leibzon's son, Sarah Tzirls, the lady baker's grandchild (Sushtik), Moshe Yitzhak Biederman and his grandson, Yehoshua Englander (Winter 1943) and others.

Shimon Lichtenstein and his grandson, who had been sent to the camp at the airfield, had wanted to get into the group of Jewish workers at "Wigoda" in Yanewe. But they were captured on Yanever Street, shot and killed.

At the start of the first week in our camp we attempted to get the Stabzahlmeister to arrange for a bath for the Jews and to conduct a disinfection. We also tried to get them to bring medicines from the Jewish Hospital and the Welfare

Committee. The Germans agreed and promised to take care of everything. By week's end, we sensed that a different wind was blowing and that nothing would come of all the things we had asked for. We saw that we were being held here as slaves. Later things would get much worse.

On Wednesday, September 30 word reached us that the women and children at the water works camp had been taken away in cars to Mezritch. The women had resisted and wanted to get out of the cars and return. Shooting started during which the mother-in-law of Yitzhak Levi (from Yaneve) and Mrs. Rivka Novominski (M. I. Biederman's daughter) were wounded. It was only yesterday that they took money from me so that my mother and aunt would be accepted into the camp. Now today they lead them away to the assembly point for Treblinka. Didn't the camp administration know about this yesterday? Why did I ever bother to offer them money? The Poles had played the lead role in this matter, but you could not ask them any questions today.

Out of our group of carpenters, some worked at the camp workshop for a while. I was among these along with remaining members of my family. The remainder of our group was taken daily to ply their trade outside the camp.

We also learned that our former boss had taken the women and children who were still in the hiding place at his workshop by car to Mezritch.

The first week in the camp passed quickly and soon it was Sunday when noone worked. Everyone was standing in small groups and chatting. In one group, people were talking with Poles. The "politicians" had their own circle and spoke of Germany's rapid demise. In another location, they were counting all the victims who had fallen during the previous week. There were no living counted among the dead [???].

Most of the workers just thought about their own situation. There was something about the way the camp authorities were acting during the last few days that bothered them. The question was raised whether they would keep us here. Someone interjected that they had already brought a large quantity of potatoes for us and that proved that they intended to keep us here.....

Jews have good noses and we smelled that this was just the quiet before the storm, that they were getting ready for something and it wasn't good.

Those of us who worked at the camp workshop only had one hour off at noon. The other workers on the other hand had two hours free. Because of this we got off work an hour earlier.

On Tuesday, October 6 (25 Tishrei 5703) about 1:30 in the afternoon, just as we had gone back to work at the workshop, and the other workers were still in the

camp, my brother's brother-in-law came to see me at the workshop. He told me that he had some news. His father had just come from the Wineta camp where the Germans had ordered all the Jewish workers to assemble at one o'clock. There was more: all the men at the water works camp had been taken away to the station. Gestapo men from Lublin were supposed to have come to confer with the local Gestapo.

Just after he had left, a fellow workshop laborer, Hanan Zuckerman, ran in and began beating his head with his fists, screaming: "It's all over for us now. We're lost! The Gestapo has come for us." He started to collapse [spamiren???]. We felt lost. The christian worker, Ignatchuk, started to revive Zuckerman.

At this point the Jewish Policeman, Yishiahu Leibzon, came in after us and called all the tradesmen into the camp. The camp was already being guarded by Gestapo armed with machine guns.

We started leaving the workshop. Before I went outside, the carpenters were already coming back in. They told me that the Stabzahlmeister in the presence of the Gestapo had told all the carpenters to return to the workshop. We heard the workshop foreman, the Pole Karpinski, lock the door of the workshop with a padlock.

It wasn't long before we saw the Gestapo leading the Jews out of the camp. Where were they going and for what? This question tormented every one of us. For the moment we had survived.

That evening the Stabzahlmeister came into the workshop. He told us to stop working and explained: "You are the last 17 Jews left in Biala. I don't know for how long. In any case, try to work hard and don't go out of the camp."

Out of thousands of people, only we 17 were left in the city? Seventeen lonely people who had lost their loved ones and dear ones. Maybe someone had the idea of keeping a few of us around as museum pieces.

When we came back from work we found the camp where are things were located had been locked. Following the instructions of the authorities we bunked in a small barracks outside the camp.

While we were standing sunk in depression, we noticed that a small group of workers was coming our way. We were really encouraged. Maybe the other workers would soon arrive. It turned out, however, that they had simply forgotten about the group of 16 workers, who had been working in the Holer Forest. This is why they were still here. They told us that all the workers from the StuAG firm had also been taken away.

We were now 33 Jews who could not find a place. Only yesterday, indeed, today at noon, there was a small town here. Now there was only deathly silence.

It was twilight. We sat in the barracks in the dark, since there were no electric lights. Shadows moved on the wall and it was strangely quiet everywhere.

Suddenly we heard shouting: "Alle Juden raus!" Yes, we thought they hadn't forgotten us after all; they've come for us now. We went outside and saw an officer standing in front of us next to a soldier who told us to line up in two rows. We waited for the order---march! They counted us and ordered a few men to go and get some bread, marmelade and kerosene for the lanterns.

They brought the bread, marmelade and kerosene. The soldier said that these had to be distributed correctly and that they should make a list of the people. We chose David Glassman (Yaakov Shulman's son-in-law) to be the leader of our group.

Shattered by the recent events we fell into our beds and slept.

In the morning, as we were getting up, the worker, Pinhas Grodner, who had been taken away yesterday with all the other workers, snuck into our barracks. He told us: --They had been taken to the train station where they met the workers from the water works and Wineta. They were told to sit outside in a garden next to the station and were forbidden to speak to one another. Later they brought the workers from StuAG, the German bakery and all the places where the people from the Wehrmacht camp had been working. Noone was brought from the Zid firm, the airfield; nor did they bring the Ghetto workers.

The Gestapo Commissar, Stillhammer, gave a speech to the assembled workers and told them not to be afraid. Nothing was going to happen to them. They would be taken to another temporary workplace. "There is no threat to those of you who are capable of working. Do not be afraid. Nothing will happen to you." With these words he finished his speech. Stillhammer insisted upon order, discipline and no talking.

Most of the workers accepted his words as the truth. Those who didn't believe him couldn't have done anything any way. One worker, Wolf Weitzman, did want to do something to help himself and fled. He was shot dead on the run by Gestapo man Schimanski.

They sat there in the garden until evening. A freight train arrived. As they were being loaded into the trains, they finally understood where they were being sent. Although there were enough freight cars, only a few were opened. The whole crowd of more than 1200 men were forced into the cars beaten brutally with clubs. It was monstrously cramped in the sealed cars. They understood that they were not being sent to work and that this whole thing was a trick by the sadistic murderers.

They had shouted from the cars: Better to shoot us now rather than to suffocate in these cramped cars!

"Shooting would be too easy a death for you!" answered the Gestapo vampire, Schimanski. The train pulled out in the direction of Mezritch.

In Biala we had already heard quite a bit about how, during the first resettlement in Mezritch, the Mezritch Jews had jumped from the trains. So when it was their turn, the Jews from Biala did the same. Where they could they opened the doors and jumped. Where they couldn't get the door open, they crawled through the tiny windows and jumped from the moving train.

However, only a negligible percentage jumped. Knowing that they had nowhere to go, the majority resigned to their fate, let themselves be taken to the slaughter.

Just as they shut the doors of the freight cars, the dentist Yoel Zilberberg and his son, Chaim, poisoned themselves.

Pinhas Grodner did not know where these people were being taken, since as soon as the train started to move he had jumped out, injuring himself slightly.

About noon the Stabzahlmeister came, opened the camp and told us to gather our belongings. At the same time he explained that each worker was permitted to have only two pairs of underwear and one suit. Tradesmen could have two pairs of pants. Severe penalties would be imposed on all those who did not obey the order. We were commanded immediately to turn over all our documents, pictures, all of our money, watches, and jewelry, because if anyone later was caught with any of these items he would be turned over to the Gestapo.

In the coming days all the belongings of the workers would have been taken away were taken out of the barracks and brought into the Ghetto where they were put under the control of the Gestapo.

In the next few days, those who had jumped the train further down the line had reported back in. Among them were Attorney Leon Goldfarb, Eizhe Rubenstein and the bootmaker Yaakov Friedman. From them we learned that the train had made a stop in Mezritch where the Jews from that town were driven into the remaining empty freight cars. It was clear that the people were being sent to Treblinka.

We also found out from the train jumpers that Lukow had had a bloody day on October 5 (24 Tishrei 5703). The little streets of Lukow where the Jews had been relatively free to move about were now awash in Jewish blood.

They recounted a most interesting incident that had occurred there in Lukow. When a Gestapo man had shot to death, Lender, the president of the Jewish Council at the assembly point, David Lieberman, a member of the Council, just at that moment charged toward the Gestapo man, tore off his epaulets and beat him repeatedly. For his brave deed, the young man was shot to death on the spot.

Our little group stood and mourned our beloved ones who had been snatched away from us.

Images of the past spun before me--images connected with my mother. From the first day I was able to remember the very last, everything was closely linked and bound up with mother. It seemed as if something in the deepest chambers of my heart had been ripped out. A wave of sadness enveloped me.

Only now did it become clear why the Germans had gone to such lengths in having the men capable of work placed in camps. The heroes of the Gestapo did not want a few thousand strong and able people to gather at the assembly point and see the bloody orgies perpetrated against their dear ones. Who knows what these Jews would have done if one of them had torn loose followed by others reacting to the bloody deeds--caused a Nazi head or two to roll. But if, however, the stronger Jews could be kept away, then the Nazis could as they pleased with the defenseless women and children.

All afternoon and evening we lied on the grass. The autumn was so beautiful and warm. It awakened in us memories of the recent past when everything was so different. We smelled the earth where many of our loved were now resting. It seemed that it would indeed have been better to be lying together with them.

Yes, I told my friends, they won't bother taking us to Treblinka. They'll take care of us right here.

But these thoughts aroused a will to live. Although life is so tormented and full of sorrow, one wanted to survive to the end to see how it all turned out... .

In a few days or so we discovered that there were still Jews in Mezritch. Most of our loved ones had been taken away to be slaughtered at Treblinka. My beloved mother, Ruth, was surely there already...there where my never-to-be forgotten, precious wife and daughter were also now resting.

We were told that the S.S. officer, Glaett was in Mezritch for the resettlement and had inquired with the Jewish council about the Biala Jewesses, Haya Rosenbojm and Boltshe Fizhitz who had offered him 45,000 zlotys in exchange for the return of the Jews of Biala from the death camp at Majdanek. It turned out that he was interested to know whether his victims were still alive.

Some of the Jews who had jumped the death train decided to come back to Biala at night to find out if there were any Jews still left in the camps. Others fled to the forests where they also met a tragic end.

The train jumpers continued to arrive. Among them were some gravely wounded people like Shepsel Leibzon, Moshe Sheinberg and Zilberson.

The Germans tolerated the arrival of the fresh Jewish workers into the camps. We, Jews, were certainly content since our family was growing.

Every time there was a resettlement action in Mezritch a few young people from Biala would return and remain among us. From them we learned what was going on in Mezritch, how horrible the actions there against the Jews were and how unbearable life was.

We also learned that in September there had been a bloody resettlement in Parcewe and that in October the group of Jews that had been allowed to remain to clean out the former ghetto had been shot to death. Parcewe, too, was now Judenrein.

Up to the end of October there were 106 of us at the central camp and at the branch camp Wineta another 47. Among the latter group there were three disguised women: Golda Shapira (Avraham Orlanska's daughter), Manya Kowarska (Leibl Goldberg's daughter) and Sorele Glicksberg (Nahman Glicksberg's little daughter).

The tradesmen were assigned to work in their trades, while the manual laborers worked at different job sites and in the warehouses.

We took over a second barracks outside the camp. The food wasn't as terrible but there was too little of it. The 30 decagrams of bread we were given a day could not still our hunger. But every one seemed to manage. If you had a couple of pennies, the christians who worked in the camp would bring the Jews enough bread, ignoring the prohibition of the workshop commander, the evil Karpinski. Although the order was not within his authority to issue, he did it any way because he took great pleasure in making the Jews suffer. While we got too little bread, we did get enough ersatz commodities to spread on the bread, such as marmelade, artificial honey, ersatz cheese and a little piece of sausage. Lunch which consisted of potato soup with some fat, would not have been bad, if the christian cooks would have not taken the trouble to make it so that it was impossible to put it in your mouth. Even when there was enough of this food left over after lunch had been served and the hungry workers asked for a little more, the christian cooks would sooner pour the food into a slop bucket than give it to the hungry Jews.

We tried to get some Jews assigned to the kitchen and spare the christian cooks the trouble of having to feed Jews, but we did not succeed.

Twice a day, in the morning and in the evening, we were given coffee, which had to be sweetened with sugar. But instead of ending up in our cups, the sugar found its way home with the christian cooks.

A tragic incident occurred in the Wineta camp. A worker from there, Shmelke Shvartz went off into town with a German and in a stable on Sadawe Street, dug up a package with valuables. This was noticed by a christian woman (the wife of a prison guard) who promptly reported this to the Gestapo. A few Gestapo men went up to the camp and ordered Shvartz to come forward. Shvartz sensed something was not right and passed off the package to a young man. The young man later gave the package to Pinhas Grodner. Shvartz was severely beaten and became so frightened that he told them that he had given the package to a young man at work. When the Gestapo arrested the young man, he had no sooner received the first blow than he incriminated Grodner to whom the young man given the package. Shvartz was taken away to the jail on Proste Street while the Gestapo took Grodner to their office at Raabes factory.

As soon as Grodner arrived in the courtyard of the jail he ran off and disappeared. A search was immediately ordered and he was found hiding between two piles of boards. When he was taken to the Gestapo jail, there in the courtyard he escaped. He came to the fence and crawled over. A few bullets knocked him off the wire. He was buried there next to the fence.

Shmelke Shvartz is supposed to have been brought one night at the end of November by car to the Ghetto Square where he was shot to death near the Radzin Hasisdim shibl.

Sad news arrived from the other camps. At a time when we in our camp would simply be beaten a few times with a club for the greatest transgression, we heard that in the camp at the Zid Company, they would shoot Jews to death for the slightest infraction. Also the sick, who were at least tolerated in our camp by the Germans, were shot as well. This is what happened in the Zid company camp to the worker Yonah Mayer Morgenstern (son of Moshe Morgenstern), because he had fallen ill. Even worse were the camps at the airfield and at Malaszewicz (near Terespol) where there many Jews from Biala. In these camps a partnership was made with the Gestapo. Every day a certain number of Jews, be they health or ill, reported to the Gestapo to be executed.

My brother left the camp at the end of October. He went off to Mezritch, whence his wife and her family had to come from a neighboring village, near Mezritch, because they couldn't stay there any longer.

Days and weeks passed. We stayed in the camp, worked and were not treated badly. Nobody could forget his suffering. Everyone was depressed and sadness oppressed our hearts. From time to time we organized an evening of song, when we sang Jewish folksongs. Jewish songs could not make us happy. To the

contrary, they made us even more sad. In every song even in the most happy ones there was Jewish moaning, Jewish pain. During the singing tears came to our eyes; you are so moved when you remember the days when you heard that song sung. What a difference between then and now! You had to go off to a corner between the beds and cry your heart out.

For us there will never be any joy again!

The religious ones among us davened Minha and Mariv every evening in public. They had a very good Baal Tfilo (prayer leader), Avraham Greenglass (Yoel Shemesh's son), who came back to Biala from Lodz during the war.

At the end of October, a group of workers lead by Zile Gutenberg escaped to the forests from the camp. The group succeeded in taking out a few weapons, ammunition and clothing from the warehouses.

One Sunday, after we had been taken out of the camp to work at the Wineta camp, we accidentally got hold of the official government newspaper of the General Government, "The Cracow News." In it I noticed an article about Biala in which it was written that according to an agreement between the gestapo headquarters in Biala and Radzin all the Jews had been transferred to Mezritch. In Judenrein Biala everything had become less expensive since the Jews had been resettled. Christian artisans who had earlier been stifled by the Jews, now were busier than ever at their work.

What did this really look like in reality?

It is true that everything had become cheaper, but only on paper. In fact, noone was able to get anything. The christians used to say that the Jews had taken everything with them....Christians were afraid to do business with one another and as soon as the Jewish shopkeeper had gone business died out. Just how much the christian artisans had been revived by the disappearance of the Jews was shown by the fact that when the rulers needed some substantial piece of work they would come to Mezritch to the few remaining Jewish tradesmen who not poorly paid for their work. Christian tradesmen also sat without work for lack of raw materials which the Jews used to supply them.

In the beginning of November the workers at the camps at the Zied and Eastern Railway companies were transferred to our camp. Together with the 47 workers in the Wineta camp, the number of Jewish workers came to about 400.

The transfer of the workers to our camp was motivated by the fact that from the first of November Jews would be located only at the Wehrmacht camp and there only behind barbed wire fences. Because this was not the case in the above-mentioned camps, the workers were brought to our camp.

On account of the arrival of the additional workers, the gates of the earlier camp were reopened, over which there was a sign on which the word, "Jewish" had been smeared away leaving only the word, "Camp." Just before this time, they had built another barbed-wire fence around the barracks. Between the two fences they had thrown wheels of barbed-wire. The camp gate was locked at seven o'clock in the evening and was opened at five thirty in the morning. German sentries kept watch all night long walking outside the perimeter, stopping each time at the barbed-wire fence to make sure everything was in order. In the camp itself, Jewish sentries walked around the fence in order to prevent any escapes from the camp.

We were fixed up relatively comfortably. In each barrack we put an oven and they did not skimp on coal for us to burn. It was clear, well-lit and warm in the barracks. Whoever wanted to keep himself clean had the possibility of doing so. There was not a sick person among the original 106 men.

[HERE INSERT DOCUMENT 9, WITH THE CAPTION:

"Document 9. Excerpt from "The Cracow News", praising the resettlement of the Jews of Biala. (Translation, page__).
(Archives the Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland.)"]

One morning a christian brought me a letter from my brother. From his lines I saw that he, too, had become a widower, that he too had lost his wife in Mezritch. She had been shot to death. Alone, his life shattered and resigned to his fate, he decided to risk it and went to Biala to his old employer, the Ethnic German, Kraskowski, who took pity on him and permitted him to stay in the workshop, which had been empty since the resettlement.

I hastened to send him an answer. I attempted to find a couple words of consolation for him and warn him about the danger that awaited him here. I let him know that if he wanted to return to the camp, he should do so. I would try to take care of everything and he would not have any difficulty.

He wrote me that in the meantime he had not gotten along poorly and that he had no intention of returning to the camp. He also asked if we needed anything. If so, he would send it to us.

I did not want to tell my father about this latest misfortune. But pleaded with me desparately to see the letter from my brother and in the end I had to give it to him. Once again my shattered father had to drink from the cup full of pain and sorrow.

Among the newly arrived workers in the camp, those from the Zied company were the most neglected, terribly clad and severely malnourished. Several of them

were ill with typhus. The leader of their group, Krugli, a former prisoner of war from eastern Poland, was partially responsible for their condition.

In our camp we all lived as comrades. The leader of our group was not and did not want to be a privileged character. He took no action concerning us without a consensus of opinion and he enjoyed no special privileges.

People from our camp used to go often to Mezritch to visit their families. We had to list these men as having reported out so that no goods would be taken for them, because in the event of an inspection it could have been fatal for us. Everyone who left the camp was noted as not having returned from work in the evening. After a couple days, the fellow used to come back and we used to check him in with a second name, so that he would not be turned over to the Gestapo. There were cases where people made the trek to Mezritch a few times and regularly checked back into camp under new names. There were no instances, however, when we had to demand satisfaction from such people.[transl unclear?].

The stories we heard from newly arrived Jews about the leadership of their group leaders sounded rather bizarre. They told us that when some of these leaders noticed a nice piece of clothing or personal effect and took a liking to it, they would order the owner to give it up and they had to comply. They also carried out various schemes in the kitchen, which had aggravated the Jews' nutritional situation.

Until the arrival of the new men in the camp, we had not known any sickness related problems. Now, however, a rather large percentage of the men in the two barracks, which had been taken over by the people from the Zied company, were ill. There was no doctor among us and no one certainly dared request one. The practise in other camps had already shown what consequences ensued when the doctor had been summoned. If the doctor determined that the patient had typhus, the patient would have been shot and the camp would have been quarantined for a certain period of time. We possessed several medicines and lay physicians such as Chaim Rosemarine (dental technician) and Leibl Lebenberg (electrotechnique) who took to making rounds among the sick and wounded.

To the Germans we regularly contended that these were cases of the grippe since a flu epidemic was raging in town. It will only last a days, we thought, the sick ones will be healthy and they can be taken to work.

In the meantime there were also a couple of deaths. The dead had come to a burial at the Jewish cemetery. Among the dead were: Fozhomczik (a carpenter from Lomaz), Max Borenstein (Serotzk), Spiwak (the Kirshner's son from 21 Grabanower Street) and Moshe Kornblum (Yaakov Kornblum's son, Grabanower Street 6).

The typhus epidemic spread to the other barracks. A large number of sick people were located at the Wineta camp.

We contemplated isolating the sick ones, but we were afraid to do this. Putting the sick workers into separate would have attracted the attention of the Germans. We were afraid that this might cause the sick to be turned over to the Gestapo and we did not want this on our consciences. But when the number of sick reached some sixty-odd patients, the healthy among us decided that the ill should be isolated. They argued that we could not allow everyone to get sick.

On Sunday December 13, we reluctantly isolated the sick in a special barracks. We appointed Pinhas Zhelozni, Eliyahu Singer and Grubman, all of whom had already survived a bout with typhus, to attend to the sick. We undertook with a fervor to save the sick and infirmed.

4. The Last Road

In the beginning of December I together with the leader of our group visited the Stabzahlmeister. When we arrived, he asked us politely to sit and directed us to notify the workers that he had received permission to keep us longer. So long as we were here, nothing bad would happen to us. He said he would try to have the food improved. He explained that there was no point in trying to escape from the camp, since almost all the escapees were eventually caught and shot.

We thanked him for his efforts and emphasized that the Jews were running away from here not because they did not want to work or because they did not like the camp administration. It was understandable that when a worker found out that he still had a wife and child, it was difficult to stay inside. Besides this, we were hearing rumors every day that we were to be taken away from here. We were afraid that if they could take so many men capable of working once before, it could happen a second time. We finished, though, by saying that we believed that after receiving these assurances the workers would be more calm.

That evening when we told all the workers what the Stabzahlmeister had said, many responded immediately saying: "It happens again and again, when the German murderers start giving assurances and trying to calm us down, the opposite happens." Others again were inclined to believe the good news.

On Shabbat December 12 the Stabzahlmeister left on vacation and was replaced by Oberzahlmeister, Schilf. Sunday evening after the camp gates were locked, the Jewish guards who were standing at the barbed wire inside the camp announced that the Oberzahlmeister and Zahlmeister Behme were coming in the camp.

Both men started conducting an inspection of the barracks. Oberzahlmeister Schilf was very drunk. It turned out that he had come to train his dog on Jewish bodies. Whenever he pointed to a Jew in the barracks with his stick, the dog would spring on the Jew ripping every last piece of clothing, taking with it a little piece of

flesh as well. After wreaking havoc with the dog and satisfying himself with blood, the drunkard, now contented, left the camp. This event created a tense atmosphere in the camp, since until now we had never seen anything like this.

On Tuesday December 15 our group leader was summoned to the office in Wolya in order to clear up some kind of evidentiary matter. Our group leader felt weak, however, and asked me if I would go and clear up the matter. I climbed on a cart and went off to the camp office and straightened out things quickly.

Since the camp office was located quite close to the Wineta camp, I decided to go inside. When I arrived, the Jews there immediately started asking me whether I knew where the Germans had taken the 40 Jews carrying spades. They had been given bread presumably because they were supposed to work at night. I told them that I had no idea what had happened to them.

I sat and chatted with a few friends and had lunch there. I inquired with the Wineta group leader, Koze, about the fate of the 40 workers, but he knew nothing as well, even though he was very friendly with the Germans at the camp. Meanwhile, the camp commandant came in. He was military official, known as Assistant Balmann from Hamburg, who played a schizophrenic [two-faced] role vis a vis the Jews. On the one hand, he accepted the most expensive bribes from the Jews promising to save them. On the other hand during the resettlement of the Jews in the work camps that took place on October 6, he single-handedly delivered the Jews to the Gestapo, so that they would not hide out. The tailor, Yosef Tishel, sewed diamonds into a number of suits for him while the shoemaker, Baruch Freiner, hid plenty of gold rubles in his bootheels, so that he could take them home during his vacation trips.

Balmann struck up a conversation with a sick young man, whom he had befriended and whose father was with us in the camp. The conversation lasted a long time. In the meantime, a rumor spread in the camp that the 40 men who had been taken away had been shot to death.

I suspected that the conversation between Balmann and the young man had something to do with today's events. However, when I later tried to learn something from the young fellow, he assured me that he knew nothing about it.

Depressed about the news of the 40 men, I drove back to our camp. That evening when the workers came back from Wineta, we learned that the 40 workers had in fact been shot. Several of them had succeeded in escaping on the way. Among the escapees were the workers, Herschel Weissman (David Weissman's son) and Rosenberg (Hamele Sender's son-in-law).

Those who had escaped were so distraught and confused that it was very difficult to find out anything from them. But this is what we understood to have happened more or less: Military guards lead them out of the camp. On the road, a

Gestapo man arrived on a bicycle and showed them where to take the workers. Those men who realized that the arrival of the Gestapo man was a very bad omen, started to run when they got near the Grabarker forest. Although the Germans shot after them, the men managed to reach the forest and hide. A short while later they heard a loud barrage of shots and screaming.

A new sadness spread throughout the camp, since a large percentage of those who had been shot were our friends. Fathers mourned the death of their children, while children wept for their fathers. Among those killed were the son of the tailor, Tshapnik from Garncarska Street and a son of Zimele Shnur of 17 Brisker Street.

We decided that before the camp gate was locked, we would go up to the Stabzahlmeister and ask him about the men. I went along with our group leader and we advised him that 40 workers had not come back from working at Wineta and that they were nowhere to be found at Wineta. What was this supposed to mean? He was there with his entourage sitting around him somewhat puzzled by all this. He asked us whether we knew where the men were. We told him that we had no idea. After a few seconds, he explained, exclaiming: "They're probably in the camp at the airfield. I'll telephone there tomorrow morning."

His answer confirmed for us the tragic truth. With shattered hearts we went to sleep, our heads flooded with melancholy thoughts.

Wednesday was a normal workday--everyone was at his job. The workers from our camp went back to Wineta again.

After noon, Zahlmeister Boehme came into our camp. He was accompanied by our group leader who reported that the number of sick workers had begun to decline, which pleased the Zahlmeister. The group leader asked him what had happened to the 40 men. The German did not falter and answered that they were working in the camp at the airfield. When our group leader asked when they would be coming back, he was told that they would be returning the following week.

That evening the workers from Wineta returned and told us that the Jewish leaders of the camp were no longer there. They were in the suburbs near the christian Szmietanko and would soon be back in the camp. With them was the worker with whom Ballmann had spoken. Could one ever be so threatened or intimidated that a son would not save his own father? Wouldn't he tell his father to flee the camp? Yet here was his father sitting with us in the camp.

It was a hard thing for all of us to leave the camp so suddenly. Especially, since we had such a large number of sick people. And then where were we to go--other than the ghetto at Mezritch there was no place. But if we would have had an idea of the danger that threatened us, like that young worker, we would have decided to leave the camp during the long winter night. We speculated about the young man's connections to his father, and he unfortunately was terribly

disappointed. These days even family ties had become very loose; one tried to save his own life and did not care about relatives and loved ones.

This young worker, whose name I will not mention, had in fact began to march off to Mezritch, that very night, leaving his father with us in the camp. The atmosphere in the camp was very tense. There were small groups were getting ready to escape in the coming days. Many did not want to hear about such plans. They were well-settled here and where would they go anyway?

On Thursday, December 17 (9 Tevet 5703) when I was in the toilet at about 4:30 a.m., an electric light suddenly was switched on. I knew that none of the workers had a lamp like this. Who among the Germans would do such a thing so early in the morning?

As I made my way back between the barracks, I saw two trucks in front of the camp gate shining their headlights into the camp square. Fully armed military guards were walking around the barbed wire fence. "Yes," I said to myself, "this is it. The end is near."

I ran into the barracks for the sick workers. I saw them wobbling on their feet, trying to dress themselves. They started bombarding me with questions. I tried to comfort them. I saw that even the sick knew instinctively that something bad was about to happen. I understood that the Zahlmeister had commanded them to get dressed. I helped my sick cousin to get dressed and with his arm around my neck took him into our barracks, where all the tradesmen were located.

Inside all the workers were standing, nervous and resigned, awaiting the end. It was now clear that they were going to do the same with us as they had done with the 40 workers on Tuesday. We told each other that we should act with dignity in the last hours of our lives. We must not weep--we must not be an exception for all Jews.

Even though we knew we were about to go to our deaths, we still packed a few bags for the road--this caused others to laugh sarcastically.

Some thought that we should fall upon our murderers. But it was clear that to pull this off we would have had to organize and there wasn't enough time left for that, since the barracks had already been isolated. We said also that such a scheme needed volunteers who would be the first to attack the Nazis. But where were the volunteers? Someone remarked that such a plan could not be undertaken without taking a vote in advance. But in this case it might be possible to pull it off if someone would begin the attack and then everyone else would join in the battle.

The Gestapo Commissar, Stillhammer, entered the barracks with his adjutants, Peisker and Daerm. He asked if anyone knew German. The Jews shouted out my name and I was forced to move to the front.

He ordered me to have the men line up in rows of five and told me to translate this into Yiddish. He began by saying that whereas there had been several escapes from the camp, he thought the administration had been too lax. Therefore, he was compelled to transfer us to a tougher camp. Nothing would happen to us. He only insisted that we maintain order while marching. Whoever tried to escape would be shot. Moreover, as a punishment, another 20 men would also be shot. He showed me his monstrous dog which he held by his side and said that the dog would also have a word to say and would not permit any escapes.

I played the fool and asked him whether we could bring clothes with us. He would permit this, he said, but work tools had to be left behind.

Would he allow me to explain to my friends what he had just said? But then what Jew did not already understand this language of the devil?

For what purpose, I thought to myself, did they engage in this idiotic and cynical speech? Did they take us for such naive children that we would be duped by their lies? Were they afraid to tell the truth to this bunch of depressed, defenseless slaves? But such were the tactics of the sadistic heroes: not to take any chances when they still had men capable of working for them.

We heard cars driving into the camp and then back out again. We thought that they were already taking the sick workers away. As we later found out, they used the cars to bring over all the Jews from Wineta. From our camp, they also took away the sick ones as well as the workers from the first barracks.

The dark night concealed everything. We, who had already been condemned to death, stood and waited to be taken to the execution. What is more horrible than waiting for death?

A few shots rang out. We knew that they weren't just celebrating, since there were already victims in the camp. It turned out, as we later learned, that they had killed a few workers who had approached the barbed-wire perimeter. In barracks two they caught Moshe Leibzon (Yehiel Prondik's son) trying to rip up the floor in order to hide underneath. He was shot to death in the camp square. They also killed a worker who had hidden himself in a ditch near the toilet.

The morning, our last, shone weakly into our barracks, as if it were ashamed to look into our eyes. They opened the door and ordered us out into the camp square, where they line us up seven men to a row and warned us again not to flee.

Zahlmeister, Boehme, worked with all his might to show that he, too, was assisting in the holy task of exterminating the Jews. He brought out Pinhas Tsharne (Shlomo Stop's son), who had hidden himself in a box of manure and turned him over to the Gestapo Commissar.

The Commissar took the worker off to the side between the barracks and ordered him to undress. But the worker refused to obey. The Commissar kicked him and shot him in the neck. The next thing we knew the worker was lying dead before our eyes.

"You'll see!" the Commissar shouted to us, "I don't only talk, I take action as well!" He then ordered that they count out 20 men to be shot, but in the middle of the selection, he screamed: "Just this once I will make an exception and suspend the penalty of killing 20 men."

They made an exact count of us and it turned out that 231 men were getting ready to be slaughtered. We were told to put our hands down and not to look to either side or to the rear; talking to each other was also forbidden.

With bowed heads, we the condemned began our march to the execution place, escorted by five Gestapo men and another 10 soldiers.

Just as we were coming through the camp gate, we saw a dead body left near the warehouse. Off to the left by the residential block, I saw two christians with a cart and shovels. It was clear what they would be used for....

We walked out onto Warsaw Boulevard and started marching in the direction of Mezritch. Although it was already the second half of December, it was not a cold day...but the air was damp.

I used to take walks along Warsaw Boulevard from my childhood days. Today, I thought to myself, I am taking my last walk this time to die, together with my father and sick cousin [transl. 'georemt'????]

They turned us left down the narrow Slawaczinska Lane. We started stepping in water--our shoes were soaked. Now we were marching in thick mud--mud covered our shoes and pants--making walking difficult.

If someone had asked me then what my last wish before dying would have been, I would have said just to take a bath and get clean.

I glanced back. Yes, the carts with the shovels were following us.

I walked on immersed in my miserable thoughts. I thought: Maybe it's just as well that it's soon going to be over for everyone. In a few short minutes I'll be lying in the ditch. Most clods of earth will fall on me and cover me forever. Grass will grow ontop of me, and will gently wave in the summer evening breeze, while my bones will lie in the dark grave and rot. Why should my fate be any better than that of my beloved wife, my little girl, my mother, my sister and all my other relatives.

Another thought tormented me: One day there will be a day of reckoning, but who will know better than we who have suffered the price that should be paid? Who better than we could have felt the bitter tragedy? One wanted to survive and see whether Germany would be called the nation of poets and thinkers or a nation of cannibals.

One wanted to survive to see how the world would react to the slaughter of millions of innocent men, women and children, whose only "sin" was that they had been born Jews.

[HERE INSERT TWO PHOTOGRAPHS WITH THE FOLLOWING CAPTIONS:

"Biala. Entrance to Slawaczinska Lane. (Photographed after the liberation.)"

"Biala. The ravine where they wanted to shoot us to death on December 17, 1942. (Photographed after the liberation)."]

Suddenly they told us to start singing, so that we could not speak to each other. But we were able to do so anyway [transl.???]. It was a sad melody from a Polish cavalry song--and the despondent parade marched on in the mud.

I glanced at my father and then at my ailing cousin. Their faces were awash in miserable gloom and resignation. It seemed that not one muscle on their faces moved.

When they ordered us to stop singing, we could make out the last chorus of death spraying machine guns somewhere nearby. We surmised that this noise meant the end of those men who had been taken away from us in the trucks. Among those killed that day were: Yaakov Weissman (Arke Weissman's son), Moshe Gurstein (my wife's cousin), the former prisoner-of-war Kowarsky, with his wife (Leibl Goldfarb's daughter), the Dorozhkazh Botschkele, Yaakov Friedman (the bootmaker) and his little son, Sorele Glicksberg, Krugli, the former group leader at the Zied company, Eliyahu Zinger, Mattes Zhelazne, Grubman and others.

The death march stopped. We stared at our grave: a long and deep ditch in a meadow known as Kolichawa. The earth that had been excavated lay on both sides of the ditch--it would later cover us.

Just as they stopped us, the worker Yisroel Rodzinek broke out of ranks and ran off to the right. He was shot at from all sides, but he kept running. The dog refused to obey his master and did not want to move.

The scene lasted a second and then the worker, Senyor, a former prisoner-of-war shouted out the command: "Laufen! Run for it!" Screaming "Hurrah!" we took off in all directions.

Machine guns and rifles aimed a hail of lead around us. It was a deafening barrage.

I ran left to the woods which was about 200 meters from me. Death-carrying lead flew all around me. People were dropping like [gekosente??] ears of corn. There was one already lying in front of me, another fell at my side. As I ran, I threw away my short warm suit coat, scarf and gloves.

The clatter of the instruments of death did not cease. I was already out of breath when I made it to the woods and started moving slowly towards the rail line which was located right by the woods.

I looked back and noted that the Commissar and his dog were already at the beginning of the woods. I quickened my pace. As I came to the rail embankment, a train was just passing by, blocking my path. Off to my side the shooting had stopped. It turned out that they were afraid that they might miss and hit the oncoming train. The train sped past and I jumped to the other side of the rail embankment running into a nearby forest. There I met the escaped workers Yehoshua Englander, Avraham Nathanson, Eliyahu Knizhnik and others.

My first thought was about my father and cousin. My cousin was all but lost. How was it possible for him to come out alive from such shooting, sick with a high temperature--he could hardly keep on his feet? I was also troubled about my father, because he was nevertheless a man in his sixties, a worn out craftsman.

But there wasn't much time to think about this. We had to get out of there quickly, since they could mount a search. Some of us thought that nothing would happen. The Gestapo men would be too ashamed to admit that the Jews, for the first time in Biala and maybe for the first time in their murderous campaign, had refused to let themselves be taken away to the other world.

We had to get away as far as possible from Biala. I glanced back at the town, where the church spires and the tall houses could clearly be seen.

Adieu, Biala! After living between your walls for thirty-odd years, I had run away from you now like the most wretched criminal, even though I had committed no crime. I understood, though, that I am a Jew for whom there is no room amidst your walls or anywhere in the whole of Europe.

I never really considered myself a patriot for Biala, but now, as I looked back over the town of my birth, perhaps for the last time, the verses of the Polish poet, Mickowicz, in his "Pan Tadeusz" were on my lips:

How much are you worth, only he can know,
Who has lost you. Today your beauty in all its splendor,

Do I now see and describe, for I long for you.

Will I ever come back to you alive and free? For what does life mean without freedom--noone can know this better than we tortured slaves.

There was time now for sentimentality. At the moment it was too horrible for this and we had to think about where we were going. Were there supposed to be any Jews left in Mezritch? And if, G-d forbid, there weren't, then there really wasn't anywhere to go--maybe it would have been better for us to have taken a bullet in the back and put an end to it all, as we were running from the execution site.

Going deeper into the forest I met some friends who had arrived from another direction. I was overjoyed at the news that my father was still alive and was with some other friends.

Noone knew anything about my cousin. He stayed with a whole three years after coming from Lodz. He had survived all the dangers, barely 20 years old, saved our family and he was lying on the field like some kind of broken branch.

I decided to go into a village where my brother-in-law had had an asphalt plant [smoliarnye???]. Maybe he was still there. The village was located eight kilometers from Mezritch towards Biala. During the war (first world war?) I had lived there for almost two years. My friends decided to go to Mezritch. We would travel together until we go to my village.

I knew the way to the village well, but one dared not travel this route during the daytime, since one could fall into the murderers' clutches. We started wandering through forests--the way got longer and we started getting lost.

Travelling with us was Yehoshele Weissman (David Weissman's son), who had been shot in the abdomen and was constantly vomiting. He was supported by Zelig Gasser. It was hard to believe that the boy would make it to Mezritch. But Weissman did make it to Mezritch and in a short while recovered completely.

The short but bloody winter day was coming to an end. The long night was moving in. Perhaps we would be able to reach our goal under its protective veil. We were exhausted, depressed and were getting cold.

On the way we came across a few cottages from which we could see the little lights of kerosene lanterns shining through the small windows. In the windows we saw fires burning in the hearths, the flames illuminating the room. People were sitting at a table eating. For me, who had lived two years in such a village, the atmosphere was very familiar. I yearned for that idyllic existence in the cottage where people could sit at the table warm and without fear. We envied these people, since we were wandering in the forest without a goal, having keep out of the mere

sight of men. We did not even dare to go and beg for a little bread, or ask directions, since one never knew with whom one was dealing.

One had to avoid the villages, since local guards [??] patrolled at night. They could stop you and turn you over to the Nazis. How much was a Jewish life worth these days?

We were too tired to walk any further. Besides we didn't even know if we were going in the right direction. On a cold December night, lightly clad, we lay down in the middle of the forest and caught a few winks. We got up in the middle of the black night, shivering from cold. Every limb felt like it was broken--we could hardly get up on our feet. But we began to drag ourselves onward. We went back and forth, groping for our way in the blackness.

At last the dawn began to break and I saw that we were standing right in front of the village where I was going. I showed the others the way to Mezritch and said goodbye.

Through the forest I began slowly to approach a peasant's cottage. I figured he would know where my brother-in-law could be found. I had to be very careful, since there were gendarmes in the village.

I heard something move in the trees. My heart beat louder and louder, but I continued ahead. Suddenly someone jumped at me, then another, dressed in civilian clothing, standing under a tree and aiming a rifle at me. I pulled myself together and realized that this must have something to do with partisans. They spoke to me in Russian. One of them searched me and found nothing. I told them where I was coming from. After warning me to stay away from the gendarmes, they let me go.

After walking half an hour, I finally arrived at the home of my Christian acquaintance. Everyone stopped amazed and frightened when they recognized me.

I told them that since I had gotten a couple of days leave, I had decided to come here to find out where my brother-in-law was and how he was doing. They told me he was here in the forest and that I would be able to see him. They asked me to come into another room and the Christian went out. I noted that my visit did not exactly evoke a celebration on their part.

About a minute later, the peasant came back and told me that I would be able to see my brother-in-law if I would follow him.

I went out into the yard where we once had lived. I quickly went down into a [podashek??] near our stable. He raked away a pile of shavings and I saw an opening into which the Christian told me to crawl. I did as he said quickly.

I saw my brother-in-law and his bride in a underground cave, which my brother-in-law had under what once had been our stable. They had been lying there for eight weeks and the christian was providing them with food. They would sleep during the day. If they were awake they catch a glimpse of the sky through a small secret window. Later at night they would get up and go to the yard in order to breathe a little fresh air into their lungs.

I told them about all that had befallen me. I said that I would prefer to stay here, even though there are Jews in Mezritch and, I had heard, that things were quiet there for the moment. I was so depressed and battered that I could have lain here for months. My brother-in-law said that he had nothing against this idea, but he doubted whether the christian would go for it.

In the meantime, I took off my muddy shoes, as it was warm enough here to do so. I undressed under the bedcovers and fell asleep until Shabbat afternoon. Once in a while my brother-in-law would wake me to offer me food.

In the evening the christian came in and struck up a conversation. His speech was aimed at me. I offered him 500 zlotys which I had sewn into my marinarke [??] along with an almost new pair of pants, since I had two pairs, so that he would let me stay. But, as he explained, he could not let me because his mother-in-law did not agree.

"It's no use," I said, "I'll leave tomorrow afternoon."

And that's just what happened. On Sunday I bid farewell to my brother-in-law and his bride. Just as it turned dark outside, I crawled out of the den and moved quickly into the forest. I knew this forest well and I started on my way to Mezritch. Once in the forest I moved confidently and quickly. When I arrived in the city, I stuck close to the walls.

I knew the town well, but I had no idea where the ghetto was now located. I had only heard that the Zuckerman family from the area was living outside of the ghetto in their old home. Since they happened to be friends of mine, I decided to pay them a visit first off.

My showing up really shocked them. I told them about my experiences. After a short conversation, my friend, Tema Nortman from Biala, made me back into a Jew. She put an armband with a Jewish star on me and the Jewish policeman, Kozes, took me into the ghetto.

In the ghetto I tried to find my friend, Bunem Wasserman, at whose place I slept the night. When I went out onto the street in the morning, I ran into a few of my friends who had escaped from the execution site. Our hero, Yisrael Rodzinek, who had been the first to flee, was still alive. I learned that many of those who had been saved went off in other directions and that many of them had been killed on the

way, such as Yitzhak Koyfman (the grain merchant from Yanewer Street), Alter Platt (a tailor), Yaakov Rosenkerr (a painter), Chaim Shimon Rosenblatt (a watchmaker), Gringlass (Yoel Shemesh's son), Blumenkrantz (Yishaia's son) and others.

A fellow Jew from Biala recognized me and told me the news that my father was in Mezritch and was wounded. He was staying at my [his??] brother's mother-in-law's place. I went right over. I found my father in bed. He was pale with noticeable signs of exhaustion. He kissed me with tears in his eyes.

My father's left foot had been wounded in two places. The wounds were not that serious, but he had lost a great deal of blood, lying in Biala for a whole day in a field somewhere. He was only able to get away to Mezritch in the evening.

Biala, May 1943. Written in a hiding place under the floor of the Gerer Hasidim Shtibl.

[HERE INSERT MAP OF EXECUTION SITE, WITH THE CAPTION:

"Biala. Map showing location of the place of execution on December 17, 1942."]

LOMAZ

_____A small provincial hamlet in Biala Podlaska county. It lies about 17 kilometers to the south of the county seat at Biala. In May 1942 the Jewish community consisted of some 1,700 souls.

During the period of the former Polish Republic, Lomaz was part of the Brest-Litovsk District. A Jewish innkeeper in Lomaz is mentioned in a decree from 1589. After the dissolution of the Lithuania "Va'ad" in 1623, the Jews of Lomaz were attached to the Kehilla in Brest-Litovsk. In 1766 there were 475 Jewish poll taxpayers. A Jewish school at Lomaz is mentioned in an inventory of the Brest-Litovsk economy taken in 1784. At that time Lomaz belonged to the Siedlice Gubernye in Biala County. The Jews had no particular problems living then in Lomaz. In 1856 there were 1,200 Jews and 1,319 Christians in Lomaz. By 1897 out of a total population of 3,183 persons, 1,793 were Jews. {Jewish Encyclopaedia}.

Most members of the Jewish community had never ventured beyond the town limits and had no desire to have any contact with the outside world. For them, the four corners of their town were enough. There they had been born and there they would live out the rest of their lives.

In Lomaz one did not measure one's age or years married by means of birth certificates or marriage licenses, but rather by the number of fires that had broken out in the village. These happened quite frequently in town or in the surrounding area.

Late on Friday afternoons during the summer (even in the last years) the women, wearing red hair coverings would go out to the main street and stare in amazement at the cars speeding by on their way to and from Warsaw.

Almost every Jew had his own small cottage and in the winter his own potatoes from a small plot of land which he either owned himself or leased from a local peasant. The rest got by with great difficulty. Most of the population was engaged as artisans while the remainder supported themselves through retailing.

In the years just before World War II, the young people who had grown up in the village had dreams and desires far different from their parents. The older generation just could not understand the strange ways of the youth, who had suddenly grown disenchanted with life in their hometown.

During the war, Lomaz was able to take in Jews who had been driven out of other towns (Serotsk, Suwalk, Mlawa). These Jews had thought they could stay here and ride out the storm.

But Himmler's royal guards had not forgotten even about this far-off little speck of a town and used to come here often. The Jews of Lomaz soon tasted the bitter life under Nazi rule.

All of the burdens borne by Jewish Biala were imposed on the Jews of Lomaz as well. For this reason, the Jews had to pay bribes almost daily to all quarters. This was not at all easy to accomplish, since most of the Jewish population was very poor.

In 1942 when Jewish blood began to run more than ever before, Lomaz contributed her best sons. Among the victims at that time was the Zionist David Polosetzki.

The already deprived lot of these Jews became all the more bitter minute by minute, but the Jews remained in their little houses and plodded through the day.

While the first resettlement was taking place in Biala, in which Lomaz along with other provincial towns participated, the village was largely ignorant of what was going on. Just as in the other provincial villages, people here in Lomaz simply stayed at home and hid out for several days. When the trouble passed by, they started appearing again in the narrow streets.

When the bloody resettlement actions began in other towns, the murderers poured out their wrath with particular ferocity on the Jews of Lomaz. When all of Biala County was completely calm about the possibility of another resettlement action (we thought that the first action in June would put an end to the matter), Hitler's bloody axe fell mercilessly on the Lomaz congregation. What they did to the Jews of Lomaz is without parallel in the bloody slaughter that took place anywhere else in Biala County.

The only town in all of Biala County that never had the honor of stepping into the mass graves at Treblinka was Lomaz.

It is possible to say that the action in Lomaz had the appearance of an experiment. Maybe the Germans did not want to burden the railways or force the peasants to deliver wagons, or maybe they did not need to bother any of the Ukrainian and others there in Treblinka, who were already quite busy with the larger transports.

The Nazis decreed that the Jews of Lomaz were to be taken care of on the spot and this is what they meant. [Transl>=?]

A few days before, the Jews had heard that large pits were being dug in the woods outside the village. But they did not pay any attention to this. They could not begin to imagine that these pits were meant to be their graves.

Monday August 17, 1942 (4 Elul 5702) was a beautiful summer night-- everything was quiet and peaceful. After a day of hard labor, the village was fast asleep.

Meanwhile, two cars filled with heavily armed S.S. sped from Biala to Lomaz. The drunken German commander of the Winetka camp in Biala, Ballmann, suddenly announced that there would be a "heavenly voyage" [Himmelfahrt] in Lomaz. The Jews incarcerated at Winetka had no idea what he meant by this. Moreover, it would not have been possible to warn the Jews of Lomaz, since it was already late at night.

The village was heavily guarded on all sides. Aided by the local Polish police, the SS began driving the Jews from their homes. Naturally the Police police eagerly endeavored to carry out their assignment: they did not even allow the slumbering Jews to get dressed. Those Jews, whom the German murderers would not have discovered in their hiding places, were dragged out by the local police. Naked and barefoot they were huddled in the middle of the night in the village market place.

The Jews were terrified. They had no idea what the Germans were going to do to them. Sleepy children cried, infants squealed and their parents were helpless to do anything.

When all the Jews had been assembled in the marketplace, they were lined up in rows of five and ordered to march. Where they were all marching to in the middle of the night and what were the Germans going to do with them?" everyone asked himself and couldn't give an answer.

Old and young, men , women and children all marched in formation. Everyone tried not to fall behind so as not to be beaten. Soon the village fell out of sight. Looking back, they only caught a glimpse of the Gothic church tower.

Pesah Polosetzki, a village landowner, looked on nervously, crouched down with his family and thought to himself "If only my little David were still alive, he'd know what to do."

Eyes all turned toward the Sklarz family who were considered the scholars of the village--they waited in vain for an answer to the silent question: "Where are we going?"

Mrs. Piekarrzh now complained to her husband in the stillness of the night-- why hadn't he followed her earlier out of the village. She knew, though, that in such difficult times it is much better to live among many Jews-- she now tried to strengthen her argument.

At last the Jews, naked and barefoot, were halted near the forest, where only a few days before the pits had been dug. They were ordered to sit down under heavy guard.

Then they began to take the Jews in groups into the forest. A few moments later there was shooting and machine-gun fire. It was silent once more and out came the Germans again to fetch another group of Jews.

Now at last the Jews of Lomaz understood what was happening and why the pits had been dug. They sat there frozen and indifferent--could they help themselves?

At this point Jewish workers who had been assigned to the nearby Szeneiko labor camp were brought to the forest.

"Have you collected all of Lomaz here? No one was missing--will there not be a trace of us left?" the Jews of Lomaz asked.

The work proceeded quickly. It had to be finished by sunrise.

Snuffing out human lives was actually quite simple. A group of Jews would be lead to the woods. There were told to undress and to lie down on a few boards which had been laid over the pits. The murderers sprayed them with a hail of bullets. Afterwards, the Jewish workers who had been summoned from the labor camp were ordered to throw the victims off the boards and into the pits and then to reposition the boards to a new spot over the pits.

This is how it went without interruption, until someone announced that the last group had been dispatched. There were no more Jews.

It was a shame to waste good ammunition on children. So they would take a child by its little hand or foot and slam it against a tree -- a shattered little swallow would then be lying in the pit.

After a few hours' work, as the night began to retreat before the oncoming dawn, open pits lay gaping among the trees of the forest, filled to the brim with bloodied bodies. Here and there moans could be heard from the martyrs who were still somehow alive, having been merely wounded in the darkness of the night. The moaning would not last long, however, as the victims were soon covered with the smashed bodies of the little children. Then the peasants would come with their shovels to bury the bloody heap of humanity with earth under which an entire village of Jews would sleep for eternity.

Before the peasants showed up, the graves were machine-gunned again.

When morning finally broke in the village, the Jews were no more. The graves in the forest were now filled in completely. Only the freshly spaded earth betrayed the fact that something had been hidden beneath. Maybe the singing of the birds was the Kaddish Prayer over the mass grave of the Jews of Lomaz.

Christians reported that afterwards the earth over the filled-in graves moved for several days and then finally stopped heaving.

A few Jews managed to hide themselves. They arrived in Biala on Tuesday and brought with them the tragic news. Beryl Goldsher simply disappeared from the forest.

Contented with having done a good job, the Biala S.S. returned home. For days the workers in the workshop of the tailor, Friedman on Grabanower Street (formerly of Lomaz) washed and cleaned Jewish blood from the murderers uniforms--the blood of shattered Jewish children.

Those Jews who had hidden and returned to the village were shot to death by the Polish police and the gendarmes.

The village commissar, Dancewicz, was particularly adept at shooting Jewish returnees. The Polish policemen, Lukaszik and Lukowiak distinguished themselves in destroying Jews. When it came to catching Jews who had returned to their homes in the village and then turning them over to the Germans, local residents Stach Bankowski, Zenon Berger and the Riniewicz (father and son) deserve special memoranda.

The Jewish homes which had been left wide open during the action were thoroughly looted by the christian population.

So it was that in just a few hours, the Jewish community of Lomaz was annihilated and thus earned the dubious distinction of being the first town in Biala County to be completely Judenrein.

A typical example of Jewish defenselessness: The Jewish rag collector from Lomaz, Wolf Goldsher, had a license to gather rags for the Germans. At the time of the massacre, he happened to be away. He lost his entire family in the bloodbath. He had left his horse and wagon and all his goods in Lomaz and sought permission from the Biala S.S. to return to Lomaz and retrieve his goods.

The permission was granted. Despite warnings from Biala Jews that he should not go back to the village, he did not heed the advice. As soon as he had left the town limits, he was arrested by the Polish police commandant, Litwienko, who turned Wolf over to the gendarmes, who promptly shot him to death. As it turned out, there was no horse and wagon in Lomaz that belonged to Mr. Goldsher. The

Polish police commandant had apparently sold the rig for money which he then used to purchase liquor.

Biala--September 1943. Written in a bunker/hiding place in a garden located outside of town.

[HERE INSERT PHOTOGRAPH OF LOMAZ MASS GRAVE WITH THE CAPTION:
"The mass graves of the Jews of Lomaz (Photographed after the Liberation)"]

[HERE INSERT MAP WITH THE CAPTION:
"Map Showing Routes to the Death Camps."]

MEZRITCH

"We Are Still Alive, But . . ."

Some 25 kilometers from Biala to the west in the direction of Warsaw lies the town of Miedrezec-Podlaski ("Mezritsch"). This town was in most respects quite the opposite of Biala. From the outside Mezritsch appeared old and neglected in comparison with Biala. But Jewish Mezritsch was from all points of view was of a much higher quality than Jewish life in Biala.

The population of Mezritsch before the War was 90% Jewish.

In the former Polish Republic, Mezritsch belonged to the Lublin District and Mielnica [erd???] In 1765 there were 1,076 Jewish poll-taxpayers in Mezritsch. {Jewish Encyclopaedia}.

Rodzin County, of which Mezritsch was a part, had, according to the census of December 9, 1931, 15,548 Jewish souls. Of these there were 6,301 male and 6,989 female urban dwellers and 1,124 male and 1,134 female village dwellers.

A report dated August 21, 1942, sent from the Rodzin Jewish Council to the Central Jewish Social Self-Help Organization in Lublin, gives the following demographic statistics:

1. Rodzin	2,071 persons, incl. 200 homeless
2. Mezritsch	17,445 persons, incl. 6,500 homeless
3. Lukow	9,950 persons, incl. 4,125 homeless
4. Parcewe	6,031 persons, incl. 1,350 homeless
TOTALS	35,497 persons, incl. 12,175 homeless

(Note: The towns of Lukow and Parcewe were not incorporated into Rodzin County until the occupation. It is not clear whether the resettlement that took place in Parcewe on August 19, 1942 is accounted for in these figures).

Mezritch has long been known to the world as an industrial and commercial center for pig-hair and leather products. After the First World War, trade in pig-hair picked up significantly. Some Mezritch Jewish businessmen became quite wealthy as a result. The economic situation was so good that, people used to refer to Mezritch as "Little America."

Many Jews from Mezritch had spent years abroad engaged in the business and trade and were well acquainted with the world's most important trade centers.

If Biala was able to develop in the cultural arena, wealthy Mezritch could build a gymnasium (high school), a Hebrew and a Yiddish school, which operated without interference or interruption until the outbreak of the Second World War. Mezritch endeavored to invite the best speakers and Jewish artist troupes performed in town.

Like their local compatriots, Mezritch Jews who lived abroad felt close ties to their home town and volunteered to help their place birth in many ways. Some of these individuals so yearned for their home town that living many years away, they returned to Mezritch.

Then came the war. Mezritch, too, began to taste Hitler's occupation. Not being the county seat, the atmosphere in Mezritch was not as severe as in Biala. Mezritch had no German officers or officials. The Jews had a good relationship with the Polish mayor. At a time when many Jewish businesses on main streets in Biala were being confiscated, Jewish life in Mezritch continued on a fairly normal basis.

The relatively calm atmosphere was often disrupted, however, by the conscription of forced labor and the shaving off of the beards of pious Jews. Biala Gestapo men also came to Mezritch and demanded a "contribution" of more than 100,000 zlotys. They arrested several residents and held them for a day in the local public school until they received the amount demanded.

From time to time, Gestapo men from Rodzin also came to town and like their cohorts from Biala demanded different types of bribes. The Jewish Council in Mezritch was especially active, headed by Shimon Klarberg, who controlled rather large sums of money. There was no lack of people from whom rather large sums could be raised. Mezritch Jews were still quite well off financially.

Even the most ferocious of the greedy Nazis could be silenced by a glance at a pair of handsome boots or a leather coat which the Jewish Council would slip under the table as a present.

At the end of 1939 Mezritch received a large number of Jews from other towns, such as Naszelsk, Ripin, Pultusk, and Serotsk, which were incorporated into the Third Reich. Later Jews were brought from Mlawe and from Cracow and its suburbs. The Jewish Council tried to arrange things for the homeless as much as possible. Large sums of money were expended for the support of the homeless.

In contrast to Biala where from the beginning Jews were moved off the main streets into a cramped Jewish quarter, Mezritch knew almost none of these restrictions until August 1942. A few individuals were moved out of their residences, but the majority remained in their original locations.

The economic situation in Mezritch was also bearable. Jews undertook rather bold trips and did not have much to complain about insofar as making a living was concerned.

At the beginning of 1940 almost all the work-able men were taken away to labor camps. The atmosphere in town was oppressive. But the Jews of Mezritch learned quickly that money talked and used it to buy themselves out of the camps. Those who were not redeemed from the camps were allowed to come home on holidays. The camps did claim a few Jewish victims, but they were quickly forgotten and the town soon returned to its normal routine. Gradually the Jews became accustomed to the various anti-Jewish restrictions.

The new mayor, Franz Majewski, an ethnic German from Lubartow, assisted in the removal of the Jews to labor camps. He also did his best to cause mischief for the Jews of Mezritch.

The only German agency in Mezritch was the Gendarmarie with which the Jews had good relations, with the exception of one gendarme named Franz Bauer, who the Jews call, "The Brute with the Dog." Bauer caused the Jews a lot of problems and used to beat them mercilessly for the slightest reason.

At the end of 1941 the Germans ordered the Jews to turn over all their furs, through the Jewish Council. The furs were gathered as directed. Later S.S. men from Lublin came to take the booty. The S.S. men attacked Mezritch in the middle of the collection action. In an apparent attempt to frighten the Jewish population, they caused a blood bath in which twenty odd victims were killed. Among them was the vice-president of the Jewish Council, Moshe Gliksberg.

Encouraged by the blood bath, the brute gendarme Franz Bauer, mentioned previously, went further and carried out even more with his revolver. Jews were more often than not shot dead in the streets for no reason whatsoever.

In March 1942 a transport arrived in Mezritch carrying Jews from Mielitz. People heard incredible stories about things that had happened during the resettlement of the thousands of Jews who came with the transport.

The Shabbat after Pesakh 1942 several murderers from Radzin lead by S.S. officer, Heine Brasch, attacked without explanation and the streets were filled once more with Jewish blood. Among those killed were the Rabbi, the religious judge, the butcher, Lempert, two members of the Jewish council, Avraham Morgenstern and Levi Yitzhak Edelboim. The last two were not shot be accident. They had been arrested earlier and only later were they shot by the Gendarme Bauer in the courtyard of the Polish Police.

The Radziner Gestapo ordered that the Jews pay for this bloody little bit of work in gold no less. The Jewish Council carried out a gold collection action and 8 - 9 kilograms of gold were delivered as requested.

Later individual rich Jews were arrested and ordered to turn over money for their release. Anyone resisting was threatened with death. These demands for ransom money were fulfilled as well and Jewish gold was once more delivered into Nazi hands.

It was a very difficult summer for the Jews of Mezritch. The Jewish Council was increasingly powerless to do anything. The Jewish intelligentsia was being shot to death either in Radzin or in the Mezritch Jewish cemetery. Among the many shot was the applicant [??], Yitzhak Reichman.

The conscription of laborers took place as usual in town. Not a week went by that men were not seized and sent off to work far from Mezritch, in places like Baranowicz and Demblin. There was some contact with the men in Demblin, but nothing was heard from the laborers sent to Baranowicz.

In May 1942 several thousand Jews from Slovakia were brought to Mezritch. One's heart grieved just looking at the well dressed Jews carrying the virtually no luggage. It was obvious that these Jews who once had been well settled in their homes had now been shattered and thrown in among people from another culture and way of life.

There were frequent rumors about an imminent resettlement action. Panic spread--in their homes Jews sat and knit knapsacks for the voyage. In a few places the luggage lay already packed and ready to go. Soon the rumors died down and people tried to forget.

The Jewish Council did not skimp on expensive gifts for all the important Germans, who, they thought, might be able to do something to help when the time came.

Two representatives of the Mezritsch Jewish Council came to Biala at this time, A. Bleiweiss and B. Scheimel, in order to find out what had gone on during the First Resettlement action, so that just in case the tragedy befell Mezritsch they would know what to do.

The County Headquarters in Radzin made sure that there would not be a resettlement in Mezritsch. The town started feeling a little more secure, especially since they were proud of the pig-hair production which was carried out in the town under the management of the German national, Kurt de Leur. He made sure that Mezritsch had nothing to fear about resettlement, inasmuch as he had gone to great lengths in Cracow to obtain a positive assurances that his operations would not be affected. Because the Germans had resettled all those Biala Jews who did not have valid work permits, the Jews of Mezritsch endeavored to take care of this matter. They spared no amount of money to obtain work permits from the Labor Office.

The Jews of Mezritsch began to interpret the conscription of laborers in the ever more frequent round-ups as a sign that a resettlement action would soon take place in their town. The Jewish Council undertook to try and stop the round-ups. The matter was under the jurisdiction of the Central Labor Office in Lukow.

On Shabbat August 22 I went to the Central Labor Office in Lukow in order to arrange the return of the Biala Jews who had been sent to Majdanek. There I met Ben-Zion Scheimel, a member of the Mezritsch Jewish Council, who had just brought a chest of "gifts" to the Director of the Labor Office.

Right after my arrival in Lukow, I heard a rumor that something had happened in Siedlice. Trying to find out what gone on in Siedlice, the Jews telephoned a christian doctor in Siedlice by the name of Buczynski and asked whether they could bring a sick patient to see him. Dr. Buczynski replied that the Ghetto was surrounded by Ukrainians. With this rely, the situation of the Jews in Siedlice became clear.

We had an interesting conversation with the members of the Lukow Jewish Council concerning the problem of resettlements. On Wednesday August 19 (6 Elul 5702) a resettlement took place in Parcewe. Almost a half of the town's Jews were torn away and not a few were killed. The chairman of the Jewish Council, Krausz, a German Jew, was shot to death in his home.

Jewish Council member David Lieberman (who also served as liaison between the Lukow Jewish Council and the Central Labor Office there) told us that the Director of the Central Labor Office together with a representative of the chief of the Radzin Gestapo and the head of the Radzin Labor Office, were supposed to have protested to the highest authorities in the Lublin District when they heard about the events in Parcewe [translate zoln hobn geklapt in tish in di hoykhe fenster in distrikt Lublin...???]. They claimed that they did not want any more such actions in their

districts, otherwise they would lose their jobs. In Lublin they were supposed to have been calmed down with the promise that such actions would not happen again in Biala, Mezritch, Radzin and Lukow.

This was also confirmed by Yehezkiel Greenblatt, a member of the Radzin Jewish Council, who was sitting with us at the table.

I smiled skeptically and tried to make them understand that the German authorities did not want to get involved with protecting Jews. It was precisely those authorities who gave the orders to carry out the actions against the Jews in the first place and they did not ask the advice of local officials. "You see," I said, "how badly skilled workers are needed in Germany. Yet they are slaughtering thousands of qualified Jewish workers here. Do you see the annihilation that is taking place now in the counties of Minsk-Mazowieck and Siedlice, and in Warsaw; moreover these actions are not being stopped they go on. We have come to the conclusion that Hitler's regime has decided that the Jews have to be exterminated at any cost."

David Lieberman, a strongly religious Jew, opposed me. "You are really a free-thinker [??] and therefore you believe in nothing."

By Sunday people in Lukow were already hearing the gruesome details of what had happened during the resettlement in Minsk-Maz. They also said that the day before, Shabbat, the Jewish population of Loshitz was taken to Siedlice, whence they would, naturally, be taken with the rest of those being swept away in the Siedlice resettlement.

Sunday evening Scheimel and I returned to Mezritch. I had gone up to Mezritch especially to see my wife and little daughter, who had been living there with my in-laws since our tragedy in Biala. We decided to go back to Biala, since during such times we did dare be separated.

The atmosphere in Mezritch was very depressed on account of the bloody events in Siedlice and Minsk- Maz. Many people were already sleeping away from home, staying overnight at their workplaces or with christian friends.

On Monday, the Jewish Council announced, in accordance with a directive from the German authorities, that Jews would have to turn in the following metals in their possession: bronze, brass, copper, platinum and others.

There was great commotion at the Labor Office. Many women were trying to get work permits. The office was actually under siege. The atmosphere was tense-- a rumor had spread that the Gestapo from Radzin was on its way.

I went to the Zuckerman family from the tannery

Garbanye [???] at whose home one could generally find out some news. On account of their active tannery, they were in regular contact with many of the important Nazis. Once there they assured me that everything was perfectly alright. The Gestapo was indeed in town, but only because they were escorting a train carrying some important Nazi. As for my wife and child, they added, that it was generally believed that they would be no less safe in Mezritch than they would be in Biala. Furthermore, they one should not forget, they argued, that the Jewish Council in Biala had already been deported, while noone had touched the Council in Mezritch. Mezritch was still Mezritch!

Later I received a telephone call from Biala asking me to return to Lukow. It was a gorgeous summer day in Mezritch. The tension had eased somewhat. The Jews of Mezritch continued to believe that nothing would happen to their town. There was a great deal of activity in the Jewish part of town. I felt much freer here than I did in Biala.

I took a walk with my wife and little daughter. My wife was opposed to my going to Lukow. She was afraid of the train trip. I tried to make her understand that this was a question of saving our uncle and that I was the only one in town with a travel permit. She finally agreed with me and we decided that on my way back from Lukow I would stop in Mezritch and we would all go together back to Biala.

After noon, I went to the train station with my wife. There was something particularly difficult this time about saying good-bye. We looked at each other longingly. Who could have known that this would be the last time we set eyes on each other, that we would never see one another again... .

The First Resettlement (Mezritch)

Tuesday August 25 (12 Elul 5702) -- I was off early to the Lukow Jewish Council in order to get some information I needed from Biala by telephone.

As soon as I came out on the street, I heard that there was some news from Mezritch. Something had happened there, but what it was nobody knew. During my telephone conversation with Biala I had asked about Mezritch, but although Biala is hardly 25 kilometers from Mezritch noone knew anything either.

I became very uneasy and could do anything. Several other Jews and I tried to reach Mezritch by telephone, but we did not get through. The operator was able to connect with each telephone number in Mezritch but noone answered. We even took a chance and called the gendarmerie in Mezritch, but noone there picked up the phone.

The situation grew increasingly unfathomable for us. A woman who was standing nearby knew an answer to the question. She had heard that Mezritch had been bombed and so no wonder noone was answering the telephones. Soon we were all inclined to adopt the woman's version. However, the question lingered: If this was correct, why was the central operator in Mezritch so willing to connect us with each of the telephone numbers we gave him?

I tried to get some information by telephone from a forest ranger I knew in a village outside of Mezritch, where my brother-in-law lived. It did not take long before I heard my friend's voice. I learned from him that the action was underway in Mezritch. He could not give me any details. He let me know that a Pollack friend of his was in town to find out about my wife. I felt like my feet were breaking beneath me.

The news about Mezritch spread like lightning throughout the Lukow Jewish quarter and caused depression and panic. If such a thing could happen to Mezritch what lay in store for other towns?

I went quickly to the station and waited impatiently for the train to Biala. A thousand thoughts were sweeping through my mind: what could have happened to my wife and little girl? Did they manage to save themselves? Maybe our Polish friend saved them?

I decided to get off in Mezritch, guessing that the action probably took place in the same way as the first resettlement in Biala, where only those who had reported to the assembly point were in fact taken.

At last the train arrived. I could not keep seated in the train, but rather walked nervously around. As the train neared Mezritch, I noticed that both sides of the track were surrounded by Schutzpolizei. Soon I saw a large group of Jews lined up on the first platform. They were being stuffed into freight cars with tiny windows. A line of Jews was moving from the town, as far as I my eyes could see. The sound of shooting did not cease. I understood that Jews were being cut down like stalks of corn in a field... .

From the window I observed rows of Jews moving without stopping toward the trains--old and young, men and women.

I thought: What should I do? To get off the train and go into town to look for my wife and child was out of the question. If, God forbid, my dear ones were in those rows of unfortunate Jews, I would not have a hope of finding them. But maybe they managed to save themselves? It is possible that the Pole was able to do something for them. If I were to get off and join the masses, my wife would really have a tragedy.

I decided to stay on board and go on to Biala. From there I would try to do something. Pulling out of the Mezritch station, I noticed a freight car that had only wooden planks for walls--into its spacious interior geese were being carefully loaded. But there when we were coming into the station, Jews were being chased into freight cars, with tiny windows, while outside the heat of August bore down mercilessly with all its might.

No sooner had I arrived in Biala, I got in contact with several Schutzpolizei, with the help of a few artisans, and suggested that they take me with them in a car to Mezritch to bring back my wife and child. I promised them a large sum of money. Unfortunately, I was unable to persuade them.

About four o'clock in the afternoon I spoke with our Polish friend by telephone. He gave me devastating news: my wife and child, together with my wife's family had been taken away with the transport.

My eyes went black. I felt as if my heart was bleeding from an unhealable wound. For me the sun was extinguished forever. From this day on, I would be soaked with a heavy sadness that would accompany me to my last days.

I listened depressed to the tragic news from the telephone. But a pitiful smile ripped my face, when the Pole told me that the transports had been sent to Majdan Tatarski, a village near Lublin.

Although I had a travel permit in my pocket for Lublin District, I did not contemplate even for a minute going to Majdan Tatarski, because I knew very well at that time where the transports were going.

August was for me a terrible month. So many precious victims had been taken from me. My wife and little daughter had been my hope and consolation. Now, when even they had been snatched away from me, it was so hard to keep moving in this gloomy world.

I sat in my room dejected, depressed. My whole body was a piece of misery. My shattered parents tried to comfort me--but who was there around who could soften my despair? With my whole being I am now with my wife and baby girl: where is she now? Is she still alive? Who knows what torments they will make her go through and what is my wife thinking about me? In the most difficult, most painful moment of life, I left her alone. How much easier would it be for if she felt my presence next to her? She always used to say to me: "I feel so safe next to you." And now she is so far from me, with a baby, so helpless.

I know that no one ever comes back from there. But how painfully hard is it for me to accept the fact that I will never see my beloved wife again. For me she was life itself. In one moment everything was lost and extinguished.

Why do I lack the courage to put an end to my life? There is nothing more for me without my unforgettable dear ones. What is there for me to strive for now?

My darling! Your life's dream and goal was Eretz-Yisrael. You were standing on the threshold of making Aliyah to Eretz-Yisrael, when I came into your life, even though I shared the same dream. But we could never make our dream come true. Instead of Eretz-Yisrael I gave you Treblinka. How deep is my misery and my pain that I did this to you. Will you ever forgive me?

Something pulled me back to Mezritch, the city of slaughter, where I lost the most beautiful, most precious thing a person can have. I would not let myself believe that all my hopes and dreams had been destroyed. I tried to get in touch with Mezritch, but everything there had been disrupted by the angel of death. It was not until Thursday that I was able to enter the town, where my tragedy had been played out.

I had just turned on to Railroad Street when I noticed that something had happened here. This street was constantly buzzing with activity of Jewish buyers and sellers; now it was dead. There were no Jewish faces. The cobblestones were colored red--it was easy to surmise that the blood of Jewish victims had been spilled here.

In the Jewish part of town as well, which on Monday had been teeming with life, is now as quiet as a graveyard. I had the feeling that everyone had fallen into an eternal sleep. The bloodied stones were witnesses to the fact that something gruesome had happened here.

Children were roaming the streets, crying: "Mommy!" These poor unfortunate ones did not know that their mothers could not answer--they had been silenced for ever by murderous hands.

Friends of mine began to tell me about what happened during the bloody action.

On Monday evening just before 7:00, the mood in the town suddenly changed to panic. Many left their homes to sleep at their workplaces and with christian friends. The panic increased when the Jewish patients at the municipal hospital were suddenly transferred to the Jewish hospital.

About 10 o'clock that night shooting broke out in town. This lasted about half an hour and made the people even more uneasy and nervous.

In those families where they understood that a resettlement action was about to begin, people started planning what to do. Those who had work permits were certain that they were not at risk and would be left alone. Those who did not have permits decided either to hide themselves or to pack their bags for the journey. The workers employed at the Kurt de Leur Company felt the safest of all. The Company had even issued permits for families so as to protect them in case of a resettlement. Workers got tens of thousands of zlotys for these permits

A. The Jews Are Assembled

Just as dawn began to break, the expulsion of the Jews from their homes and workplaces to the town market near the courthouse began. Some Jews were not even allowed to get dressed and were driven naked from their homes. Shooting broke out throughout the town leaving the streets filled with Jewish dead.

The following took part in the action: the Gestapo from Radzin under the direction of Commissar Fischer Brasch; the Schutzpolizei; the gendarmes; and Ukrainians. The Polish Police also participated, lead by Pszodownik Babicz, who worked hard to ensure that they would not be criticized, God forbid, for treating the Jews too mildly.

[HERE INSERT PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MEZRITCH MARKET WITH THE CAPTION:

"The Market at Mezritch. Assembly point for Jews during the Resettlement."]

The murderers paid an early visit to the Jewish hospital. They went from bed to bed and without exception killed every patient. The hospital was actually soaked in blood.

The scene at the orphanage was horrible. The Jewish Council had gone to great lengths to outfit the orphanage to take care of the poor orphans in the best way possible. But here too the ruthless killers went to each little bed and shot the small children dead. Only a day before the home had been filled with the happy sound of children singing. Now in the little beds young lives lay snuffed out in pools of coagulated blood. The home actually looked like a slaughter-house.

The sunshine pours through the windows, its rays caressing and tickling the little children as if wanting to arouse them from sleep. The day is now in all its glory, the little Moysheles and Shloymeles used to romp around here all day long... but the "New Europe" has made them motionless and turned their little bodies cold.

How much talent, how many hopes were stolen here from the world! Why was so much torment poured out upon these innocent little souls?

The sun could enliven and awaken the whole world to life, but it would not be able to restore a single life in this house, where the 20th century German foot had tread. Evening is coming; the last rays of sunlight caress the bloodied heads for the last time, before they are lowered into their dark little graves.

In my mind I saw the terrible sight of Jews being driven again into the market place. They were being chased from all sides, running dazed and bewildered. Many fall suddenly in the midst of their flight, their skulls riddled with holes. Everyone is thrown off their homes. The infirm are spared this trip: a bullet puts an end to their

life. The last death throes of the sick are stifled and the home is wrapped in deathly silence. Those who do not want to leave the sick share their fate in the house and are exempted from everything that is about to happen outside.

You can see the picture of a daughter shot to death on the bed of her ailing mother who has also been murdered where she lay, because she would not leave her mother's bedside. The daughter's blood mixing freely with the blood of her mother.

Here in the street lies young Mrs. Kogut. She has not been shot, but she is nevertheless dead. How did this happen? The murderers had come into her room to drive the people out and had shot her young boy in the process--the young mother did not take long to think it over-- she threw herself out of the window.

The market has filled up. It seems as if the whole town has assembled here--but still Jews are being chased midst beating and shooting from everywhere.

A few members of the Jewish Council are walking around the marketplace trying to reassure the crowd that the Nazis are only taking a couple thousand people without work permits; the rest will be freed.

The Jewish policeman, Shimon Goldman, assures his mother, who is sitting pale in her nightgown, that she shouldn't worry--he will mail her a package of clothes in a couple of days....

The sun beats down mercilessly on the crowd of people sitting in the market place. Someone tries to stand up, tumbles right back down, he will never be able to get up again. The sound of infants crying is deafening; their mothers have nothing to give them--they didn't have a chance to bring anything with them. They sit languishing for hours without a drop of water. Despite everything the sun does not yield, it hangs in the midst of the sky and burns like fire. People take care of their needs where they sit. Children are running among the crowd looking for their parents making a good target for the murderers' bullets. Many dead lie among the living, who themselves are almost half dead.

The Ukrainians, Chmielnitzky's grandchildren⁰, actually walk on the heads of Jews sitting in the square. They beat the Jews ruthlessly with clubs and axes, robbing them in the meantime of their valuables.

The town, especially the market, are heavily guarded. Whenever a Jew is found trying to evade the Aktion, they shoot him on the spot.

At last the Nazi heroes arrive for their work at the marketplace. It does not last long. Workers form several companies will be put in special groups and will be taken away to their workplaces. The majority of them are men, who do not grasp that they will soon be separated from their wives and children forever. The permits

⁰ Reference to Bogdan Chmielnitzky--1648 Insert note here.

that the Kurt de Leur company had issued to its workers' families had not been accepted. These men too would be separated from their wives and children. A small percentage of the men begin to understand what is happening here and thanking G-d for mercy, decide that their place is at the side of their helpless wives and childrens.

There was a difficult problem with those children whose parents were forced to remain in the marketplace while their children forced to leave. There was no time to think about it. Since nearly everyone thought that the Jews were being taken to another town, they put their children in the hands of good friends for what they thought would be a short time, until they would be reunited

Some parents could not bear to leave their children and they went together into exile [transl???]. It was the most difficult for mothers to leave their children and they ended up accompanying the children.

The selection process was carried out to the accompaniment of gun shots--people were once again beaten murderously.

No exception was made for the members of the Jewish Council, of whom only a few were freed. The remainder, who are here in the marketplace, are sharing the same fate as the rest of the community. Among them are current council members, Hersch Chaim Rosenzweig and Yisrael Weiner.

The people are exhausted and resigned. They think to themselves: "Let whatever happen happen, just let there be an end to all of this!"

At last the masses sitting in the marketplace are ordered to stand up. They are place in rows and the march to the trains begins. There seem to be no end to the lines of people--exhausted, resigned, depressed, elderly, women, and children. The sick also drag themselves onward, trying not to stop moving and remain behind. The murderers eye a victim--there is a gunshot--someone falls to the stones. A rivulet of blood flows from him, his brains splatter all over.

Here a young, pregnant woman lags behind. Her row is already several meters ahead of her. Her feet collapse under her. She tries as hard as she can to catch up with the group but cannot manage it. A Schutzpolizei leads her away off to the side and orders her to lie down on her back. People think that they are letting her rest and catch her breath. Then suddenly there is a shot aimed right between the young woman's legs. She goes into convulsions. The knight from the land of poets and philosophers just stands there and waits until he fires another bullet into the woman and puts and finally puts an end to her life.

Now the last rows of the procession are leaving the town and nearing the freight cars. The Jews are even afraid to cast a parting look to their birthplace from which they have been torn away and to which they will never return.

A deathly silence covers the Jewish quarter, as if death wanted to devour everything. From time to time the sound of a gunshot splits the silence and send another Jewish soul from this world. There are pools of blood drying everywhere.

The gravediggers work quickly. The municipality has also dispatched christians to assist in the work. Noone could give them any advice. The dead numbered in the thousands. Huge graves were dug at the cemetery, which were soon filled with the dead. There was no sadness, there were no warm tears of relatives at the gravesight, only the last caress of sunlight and then spadefuls of earth fall on the victims and concealing them and separating them from the world forever.

The Jewish home lay open. They are looted by the bloodied hands of the murderers who steal the best and most beautiful things.

It is a bright summer's night in the city of slaughter. A clear, star-filled night sky reflects into every little corner. The night listens to the moaning of the wounded, who although they had been shot had succeeded in escaping the hangman's noose. They lay now alone in fields, loosing blood. There is not a soul to offer a sip of water to their parched lips.

A few stick carefully peek out of Jewish houses, but quickly go back inside. The town is still filled with Nazis and shooting can often still be heard.

Jewish children, whose parents told them to get away and hide, wander in the woods weeping. They had thought that someone would soon come to take them home. But night had fallen and they roamed alone in the woods, hungry and thirsty. The very young children cried so loudly that their weeping echoed throughout the woods filling the hearts of the children their with even more dread. When day came, christians brought lost children back to town. More often than out, those that came back found no trace of their families. They wandered helplessly in the streets and cried.

A new, fresh day dawns in the bloodied town. You have the impression that all the Jews of the town have been taken away. They why are the murderers still here? But the bloodlust of these Bearers of Culture has still not been quenched. They sensed that there were still a few Jews left in the town and decided to take care of them at any price. And so another day of bloody labor was under way. They found Jews underground and so the gruesome spectacle of the night before was repeated all over again on a smaller scale.

On the first day of the blood bath, some ten thousand people were sent to the death factory at Treblinka and another one thousand lay dead in the town. The

second day another six hundred were sent to Treblinka and another two hundred dead were dropped in front of the municipal cemetery.

For two days the blood-thirsty murderers went wild in the town--murdering, robbing, destroying. From what had once been a Jewish town full of life, energy, initiative--what had once been a town famous the world as a commercial center--all that now remained was a handful of broken, despairing and depressed Jews.

From what had once been a population of some 18,000 inhabitants (exclusive of the approximately 1,200 workers who had been transported earlier to other towns) there now only 5,000 souls.

There were cases of entire families having been taken not leaving a single member. There were houses which had been completely stripped of residents, so that when it was over they were left totally abandoned.

B. In the Hideouts.

The Jewish population did not have any special hiding places at that time. A large number of people fled to christian homes on Monday evening during the panic. Certain individuals tried in the evening to get out of town which, however, was already heavily guarded. They paid with their lives. By evening Jewish dead were already lying on the streets.

Those who decided to remain in their homes used various types of locations to conceal themselves. Thus, many hid themselves in attics, basements, stalls, different little nooks, in tall grass of yards, etc. It was principally those people who lacked work permits that tried to hide out. They thought this alternative to be far better than reporting to the assembly point.

There were some noteworthy occurrences that came to light after the days of blood and carnage.

Here sit a grandmother and grandfather, old people without work permits, sick people who were hiding from the Nazi murderers, here they were weeping for their healthy, young grandchildren who had work permits and who had not wanted to go into hiding. The young ones were sure they would not be taken. The spasmodic weeping of an old woman can be heard coming from an apartment--she is beating her head against the wall, asking why she left her only son, her provider and protector, at the assembly point, from which he will never return.

The storm had broken so suddenly and so forcefully over the town that no one had a chance to think about what to do. Everyone had to deal with the tragedy himself in his own way.

People made it into the hideouts at the last minute without having made any preparations. There was no food, not even a drop of water. If a hideout had room for ten people, twenty or more would wind up inside. They almost suffocated from the cramped conditions. One person lay on top of the next, mute unable to move, full of fear that one would be discovered with every passing minute.

Hungry and parched from thirst, they lay half-dead, not knowing what was happening in the streets. People were terrified at the slightest sound and came undone with every shot.

The situation of the children was most tragic of all. These little ones who had no idea of what was going on. And the infants- how could one complain? They cried incessantly. Many poor babies had to close their eyes for ever. Some children who jeopardized the safety of the hideouts were suffocated.

There were also cases where mothers could not bear to harm their little ones with the result that the crying was detected. The people were quickly pulled out of the hideout by the Germans and shot dead on the spot.

Nor was it an easy task to deal with the children who were at an age at which it was possible to talk and reason with them. The child would of course want to know why he had to lie in the hideout today of all days, while yesterday he was free to run around the streets. How could those had to lie in these dark holes, where one had to hold his own breath, let these children understand what was going on here?

People who hid out in places that were not at all safe came to expect death at any moment. Every so often Nazis would walk by a spot where Jews were hiding and would by chance notice bodies that had not been shot through, after someone had lost their breath out of sheer fear.

In the evening, people would crawl out of their holes and sneak quietly into their homes. They would fill pails with water. However, there was not water everywhere. Many paid with their lives when they risked going to the well or to a neighbor's house for a drink. Several tried to escape from this hell at night and get out of town. Not everyone succeeded, though, since the town was guarded. The slaughterers roamed the area like wild wolves in search of prey.

Many died when they left their hiding places at night in order to find out what was happening outside. When someone would go outside from the hideout and then not return, it was a sign that one better not move from his spot. There were also hiding places where the people lay for days after the bloody storm had abated, because they did not know what was going on in the town.

When these people finally emerged half-dead from their hideouts, they found out about the slaughter. Everyone started looking for his family but in vain. There

were hardly any families that remained in tact. Only about three to four hundred men still had their wives, the rest of the men had no home whatsoever.

There were relatively few casualties from the hideouts in the Jewish area. The greatest number of dead came from the hideouts in the christian neighborhoods (on Piszczonka Street), especially on the second day of the action, Wednesday, when many christians revealed the hiding places located on their streets.

C. At the Station and in the Freight Cars

We learned about the fate and the suffering that befell the deported Jews from people who had jumped from the moving trains and had returned to Mezritch. As the masses of defenseless, helpless and humiliated Jews assembled at the station, the Germans and their Slavic assistants decided to play some games with them.

Elated by their great victory over the impotent Jews, the Germans started guzzling the wine and liquor, which the Jewish Council had delivered earlier, as a downpayment (what a bloody mockery!) for the arduous work this band of murderers was about to perform.

They threw their empty glasses into the air right over the heads of the Jews. Whoever was hit by a falling glass would be dragged out of the crowd, amidst uproarious laughter, and beaten ruthlessly. Several were shot to death. Then they ordered the dead Jews to be loaded in the freight cars together with the living. This is how the young man, Berke Finkelstein (Kalman's son), was beaten mercilessly and was hurled into a car, dying.

There were frightful scenes as the Jews were being driven into the freight cars. Driven and beaten with whips and clubs, the Jews ran to climb into the awaiting freight cars. The cars were quickly stuffed with Jews standing head to head. But there were many left for whom there was no room in the cars.

The hangmen probably never counted on such a large number of Jews falling into their hands. Or maybe they purposely ordered a smaller number of cars.

When it came to finding room for the remaining Jews, the chief of the Radzin labor office, Gala, distinguished himself particularly. On his orders, the Nazis started ruthlessly beating the crowds of people in the wagon to make more room; the Jews standing outside the trains received heavy blows and began jumping into the trains and stuffing themselves in wherever they could.

There were cars in which the people did not stand at all, but rather lay on top of each other stacked in layers. The problem is solved; places were found for all the Jews. In a freight car where there was room for maybe 60 - 70 people, they crammed 200. The packed freight cars were soon closed and locked shut.

The first victims fell in the overcrowded cars for lack of air to breathe. I say "fall", but there was no place to fall. The dead simply remained standing among the crammed in masses. A few of the more energetic ones, who realized what was happening here, pushed their way with great difficulty to a small window in the freight car and crawled out unnoticed onto the platform where they disappeared, as did the young man Moshe Goldman.

The train started moving. The loud gasps and drone of the locomotive could not drum out screaming, weeping and moaning which came out of the sealed shut cars.

Whoever felt he had the strength made his way to the little window, the only place where one could get a little fresh air. The people had not realized how precious a commodity air could be. Not everyone succeeded in getting to the window. It was not that any tried to prevent him from getting there, it was just that he encountered a wall of humanity and could not move an inch.

By now people were walking on a layer of dead men in the cars; now there was a little more room. People tore their clothes off. Still the air was oppressive and the small amount of fresh air from the window was hardly enough to help. People collapsed from asphyxiation. The only request these barely living people made was: "Give us a little water!" "A little drink of water to refresh ourselves!!"

Mothers holding small children in their arms, the clothes torn from their bodies, whisper with their last ounce of strength: "Waa--ter." Soon they wobble on their feet and collapse. They still clasp their children in their arms, the children are already dead. The mothers cannot bear to be separated from them.

In other cars, the children were more resilient. They pull at their mothers with crooked little hands and cry: "Ma--ma; a lit--tle wa--ter." Their mothers are silent,, they have fallen into the eternal sleep dreaming about a little water.

Those mothers who were still alive and could not bear to see the pain of their little ones, who were suffering so terribly, begging for a drop of water, gave their children urine to drink. One mother licks the sweat off her neighbor and wets the parched lips of her little swallow.

Here is the tailor, Avraham Weinapple from Warsaw, standing by the little window, getting a little fresh air. His wife is already lying dead at his feet. He casts a half-crazed look at her. But he cannot suppress the thought of saving himself. A last look at his dead wife and he jumps from the train. A few days later he managed to drag himself to Mezritch.

Mrs . Hinde Miedresetska (from the Manperl home--[maiden name???) is completely exhausted, hardly breathing. Nevertheless she manages to get to the

window and throws herself out of the car. Her husband and family get news of her jump from the train and send a christian to bring her back home.

Many fight their way to the window to get a look outside. They stick their feet through the window. Soon their bodies are outside. They hold on to the window with their hands, hanging on until they make up their minds and jump off the train. The momentum of the speeding train gives them an extra push and throws them away from the train. A little while later he recovers, stands up on the ground and checks to see if he has been injured.

Some are thrown by the movement of the train under its wheels and are left behind dead. Many who were able to get up, lay unconscious for a few hours, felt terrible pain and noticed that they had been badly injured. Ukrainian guards sat on the cars until Lukow station and shot at everyone who jumped. Many bullets missed their mark. Before they got to Lukow, many did not yet know how to squeeze through the window and consequently only a few people had jumped on the way. After Lukow when the Ukrainians had got off the roofs and stopped shooting, and the increased number of dead in the cars made it easier to get to the window, more people jumped from the train. Young and old, men and women alike jumped and most made it.

There were a few still alive in the cars. They sat and stared at their dead relatives unable to leave them behind. It was a moving mortuary with two torches in the front sliding quickly on the [transl???]. There would be less work in Treblinka thanks to this transport; a ready-made cemetery would arrive at the death factory.

They only jumped from the train the first day, Tuesday. In contrast noone came back from the second transport on Wednesday. This may have been due to the fact that the second transport was far less cramped and thus the people in it may have felt a little more free and at ease.

Some time later the Jewish Council received a demand from the Railway Directorate to pay the transportation costs for both transports.....

AFTER THE DISASTER

The few thousand Jews that remained were not able to return to normal. They didn't work, they didn't do business; after all why should they--what did they have to work for? Wasn't life for the survivors just a mockery, a joke?

Mezritch is a cemetery. Everywhere people wander mourning the loss of their near ones, who had been so suddenly and so quickly snatched away. Everyone longed for his dear ones. At the same time they were plagued by the thought: Why did we leave each other? What good was it to keep on suffering for the devil? Wouldn't it have been better for us to have gone with our loved ones and spent our last moments suffering and sharing the pain together?

But the surviving Jews were not even allowed to bemoan the disaster that had befallen them. Soon thereafter an order was issued: there would be a ghetto for all

Jews. In a limited number of days, the 5,000 Jews remaining Jews of Mezritch would have to move into a few filthy alleys of the Shmuelevizna section of town. They could hardly lift their hands for the move. People had to leave their old, familiar nests, only just recently emptied of their inhabitants, but which was still filled with the sights, sounds and smells of family life; they had to tear themselves from the warm surroundings where until just yesterday their loved ones had walked.

The transfer to the Ghetto had to be carried out at an extremely rapid pace. The Jews no longer the responsibility of the mayor of Mezritch. From now on they would be under the "more secure" protection of the Radzin Gestapo, which had already sent a coordinator with the nice sounding name, Heine, known from the slaughter that took place on the Shabbat after Pesakh 1942.

Every time the Gestapo man, Heine, took a walk in the Jewish ghetto, a few more Jewish lives were lost. There did not have to be any reason for this to happen. It was enough for him to hear the voice of someone singing Psalms coming from a window; a few minutes later that voice would be silenced forever. For him a Jewish life was nothing more than a plaything. When people saw him coming from a distance, the few ghetto streets became empty. Everyone went into hiding.

The Gestapo became the heir of all the possessions left in the abandoned Jewish homes. The property from the residences was taken off to warehouses which had been built specially for this purpose. Those items which were not taken to the warehouse were just thrown out of the window onto the streets below and burned. Among the general items burnt, were books, holy texts, precious objects, that the people had acquired through years of toil.

Those who worked in the warehouses were Jews, whom the blood-thirsty Heine used to conscript each day to finish the work. If there was the slightest suspicion, the Jew would never again return home. This is why he shot a woman who had allegedly put on a pair of socks in the warehouse.

No one dared appear in the streets during work hours. If one did not have a work permit, one did not dare even stick his head out into the street where the revolver ruled and trials were very abbreviated....

ASSEMBLY POINT FOR TREBLINKA

The Nazis realized that it did not pay to dispatch trains to every town and village in order to pick up Jews for the lime ovens in the death factories. They decided to designate several collection points in Poland where the Jews could be gathered. From these advance locations, the Jew could be brought more easily to the sacrifice ("Akeda"). Actually they did not need very many assembly points, because the number of Jews in Poland was already small. They designated a small number of towns where the Jews were to live in ghettos behind barbed wire fences. All Jews had to reassemble in these towns which were called "Judenstadt." Many Jews saw in

this a ray of hope: maybe they would let the few Jews left stay in these towns to struggle and live... .

Among the towns fortunate to be chosen as administrative centers [??] for the death combines was Mezritch. Jews from Biala and Radzin counties were collected here. From all directions, wagons pulled into Mezritch packed full with Jews who had been torn away from their homes in order to suffer a little more, before death would come and put an end to their torment.

Radzin, too, where the chairman of the Jewish Council, David Lichtenstein, was well connected with all those in power, had to prepare to move to Mezritch. When it was understood that the resettlement would take place no matter what they did, the Jews would voluntarily leave town. [?? transl]. Thus it was determined that from October 14 to October 16 1000 men would leave town. A small group of workers would remain in town to work for the Gestapo.

The blood-suckers did not, however, want to fall behind their timetable for other towns. They did not do this in town, they only

The chased the Jewish wagons to the Mezritch highway where a bloody orgy took place in which dozens lost their lives. On the wagons themselves one could see bundles with a momentos of the Jews' possessions which they had left behind in their homes. The majority of Jews came empty-handed, since they were not allowed to bring anything with them. In fact most were not even properly dressed, their teeth chattering from the cold, as the autumn winds were already starting to blow.

Many who had been warned in their homes of the oncoming resettlement had taken the best of their possessions and given them to Christian friends to keep. They risked their lives to run out at night to their Christian friends just to pick up what little remained of their more valuable things in order to have something to sell. But many of the Christians played dumb: they did not know anything about anything. Others would not even allow the Jews over the threshold.

The homeless could not forget their own homes, from which they had been forcibly evicted right at high holiday time. They had made it through the days of awe in their homes, but Sukkot was not fated to be celebrated in town where such festive days had once been regularly observed. Sadness flooded the hearts of the small-town Jews who had lived for generations in their little cottages and had not so much as looked upon another town; some of them had never even seen a train. Their world began in one corner of the shtetl and ended in another. Life in the shtetl was everything for them. And yet here they were roaming among strangers in a strange world.

The homeless lay squeezed together in the narrow [shmulevizne--transl?] streets, separated from the Mezritch residents, who were afraid to mix with the

homeless. They deluded themselves into thinking that the Nazis intended to do this only to the strangers not to the Jews of Mezritch. These illusions would not last long: soon they would be strolling in the world to come, spinning the thread of memories. It would not be long at all before the death factory would start demanding yet another transport from Mezritch.

Right after Sukkot on Tuesday, October 6, 1942 (25 Tishrei 5703) a resettlement action began and lasted until Friday, October 9. In Mezritch this was known as the "Second Resettlement." The third resettlement began on Tuesday, October 27 (16 Cheshvan 5703) and lasted a few days.

The last resettlement of 1942 began on Shabbat, November 7 (27 Cheshvan 5703) and was entitled the "Fourth Resettlement."

During the just mentioned resettlement actions, the murderousness known from the bloody first resettlement reoccurred. There was, however, one difference: at the assembly point and in the streets, in homes and in the hiding places there were even more ghastly scenes than what had occurred during the first bloody spectacle.

The Jews in the freight cars were not under the same illusions as were their predecessors in the earlier transporters, who had believed that they were being taken to another place where they would be able to go on living. For these Jews it was already clear where the road was taking them.

It was not so easy this time to gather and drive the Jews out into the marketplace, as it was during the first action. Having learned from the first resettlement, the Jews disappeared into hiding places. To get them out of their hideouts took several days.

Consequently, they started gathering the Jews in the Shul and in the cellars of the Shul. The people lay cramped in the Shul and in the cellars for days on end without food or drink. People had to excrete on the spot and the stench was unbearable. Different types of police kept watch over the Shul and the cellars. They passed the time by shooting among the crowded masses, leaving several dead.

When those in the Shul started murmuring that everyone should break out of his chains and flee, the infamous brute gendarme, Bauer, would be summoned, to still the muttering with his machine gun. One such visit would behind leave a new dozen corpses.

The Jewish Council tried as much as possible to alleviate the situation, but would could it really do? It tried to demand bread for the prisoners. But it could not supply enough bread for thousands of people.

The workers who were liberated during the action stayed at their workplaces and did not come home. Residences in the ghetto stayed open. Everything seemed as if it were dead.

After several days of being held in the Shul and in the cellars, the people were taken to the trains.

As people were taken to the trains, bloody scenes were repeatedly enacted. A few tried to hide themselves in the Shul, but they were soon apprehended and shot. Several attempted to jump out of the Shul windows and paid with their lives. The blood-thirsty Heine stood by as the Jews were taken away. Whoever did not please him was spared further torment, since he remained there in the makeshift cemetery.

During the third action something happened near the trains that exceeded in all likelihood any of the other crimes and murders perpetrated by the Nazis: waiting for the train which was supposed to come for the Jews, the Schutzpolizei selected out several beautiful women from the masses and raped them. Having finished the debasing act, they stabbed the women's genitalia with their bayonets. The women, raped and bloodied, both dead and near dead, were thrown into the freight cars.

Jumping from moving trains was by now a weekly occurrence. One could see people who had already jumped three times, like the young man, Jagoda, from Naszelsk. For these people, the whole affair was something of a game. They would rather risk jumping from a speeding train than lie for days in a hideout.

The Mezritch-Treblinka rail line was strewn after each transport with a large number of bodies of people who had died from jumping. A few of the more fortunate jumpers did not make it back to Mezritch, meeting death instead along the way. Gendarmes searched all roads after transport had gone by. Anyone who did not meet his end during the jump, soon found his grave in some field or forest.

Hiding places were relatively better prepared this time. Holes were dug under the floors of homes accessed by a secret entrance. Double walls were built in residences in attics and in garages.

People would spend their days in the narrow hiding places where tragic scenes would be played out. The number of cases of dead small children increased and even older children were put to sleep, children who could not grasp the seriousness of the situation. Chama Kalichstein and Lidsbarska (Moshe's wife), two women from Biala, perished in the hideouts at this time.

Day and night they sat cramped in the hiding places. When the opportunity arose to make contact with the workers who came to clean out the ghetto, the first question was: "Have they already been taken away?" referring to those who had been recently captured and were locked up in the Shul and cellars. When the answer came, "Not yet," an unhappy grimace appeared upon the faces of the people in the

hideouts, as yet one more question was put with chagrin? "Why are they being held there so long?" And the people knew full well that among those who were being "held so long" could be their own parents, brothers, sisters and relatives, stripped as human beings of all feeling!

People lay for weeks in the narrow and filthy hideouts wanting only to catch a breath of fresh air. If the transports were sent away, then one could hope that action would end soon. Then they would be able to come out of their holes and wash off the ingrown dirt; they could eat and drink their fill and grab a moment's respite until the second action. They did not complain now, they did not save anything and indulged themselves with the best, because for them money had lost its value. These days one did not accumulate capital, since death stood on the other side of the door--for what should one leave his money and for whom? One did not need money going to Treblinka.

When the storm passed, one had to steal out of one's hiding place and find a new shelter. After each action the area of the ghetto became smaller. Whereever the ghetto had been located earlier and where Jews were still in hiding, the punishment was death for any Jew who would be found there.

As soon as the boundaries of the new ghetto area became known and the workers were already at work there, one would quickly move over there in order to find a place in a ruined building where he could settle in for several weeks.

A few tried to take some things with them from their former dwellings, but very few succeeded. The murderer, Heine, knowing quite well that people wanted to go out night into the former ghetto to take something from their household, did not rest. The still of the night was often jolted by the sound of pistol shots. Among the victims were Mrs. Rosenfeld from Piszczac, Arke Weissman's daughter from Biala and others.

In any event, there was nothing much left in the old ghetto worth taking, since during the time the owners were lying in their hiding places, the best items had been hauled off to German warehouses.

Each time the ghetto was reduced and shrunk. The narrowness was monstrous. In one small room almost a dozen people were crammed in. There hardly was any room to turn one's body. Some would stretch out on the floor while the rest would take turns sitting up. Using a {koptshendikn?} light, they would delouse themselves, since there was no want of the third of the ten plagues after sitting for weeks in filth without washing.

During the fourth action it was very difficult for the newly assembled Jews to make it to the transport. For long days and nights these people would lie in the Shul with its broken window panes in the cold frosty November waiting to be marched off any minute to Treblinka.

In the hiding places, even after the word came that the Nazis had taken the Jews to the trains, people decided to sit and lie for a couple of weeks until they heard the report that the workers from the workers quarters had finally come to settle in the new ghetto.

[HERE INSERT THE FOLLOWING TWO DOCUMENTS:

"DOCUMENT 12. MEZRITCH. CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE GERMAN KURT DE LAUER IN CONNECTION WITH THE RESETTLEMENTS (TRANSLATION PAGE _). (ARCHIVES OF THE CENTRAL JEWISH HISTORICAL COMMISSION IN POLAND)"

"DOCUMENT 13. MEZRITCH. CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE GERMAN KURT DE LAUER IN CONNECTION WITH THE RESETTLEMENTS (TRANSLATION PAGE _). (ARCHIVES OF THE CENTRAL JEWISH HISTORICAL COMMISSION IN POLAND)".

Only now did the people emerge from their hiding places, living dead, most of whom were suffering from frostbitten feet. Almost all were filthy and infested with lice. It had been the last bloody act of the year 1942.

It should also be mentioned here that the Jewish Police played a tragic role in the bloody actions. They had not just one Jewish life on their conscience. In many cases they willfully betrayed their own brothers and sisters to the Gestapo.

THE ROAD TO TREBLINKA

The fourth action was the last of 1942. Visibly exhausted and devastated by the events of the past four months, some of the survivors tried to save themselves from further dangers. Most had Polish identity cards made for themselves. For this little shred of paper people would pay enormous sums of money.

Naturally it was impossible for someone to live with these documents in the same province town. Everyone, as a result, tried to get themselves settled in Warsaw. For this one needed a considerable amount of money. Neighbors sensed that they were dealing with a Jew and the Jew was in real trouble with blackmail and had to expend thousands of zlotys to protect himself. Among the christians there were those who became specialists in this area. There were those among the

blackmailers' group who used to specialize in spying on Jewish women, from whom they did not demand money only their bodies. Jews who returned from the Aryan zone used to tell hairraising stories about the christian extortionists.

Most of these Jews ended up paying with their lives. After weeks, even months, of suffering, they would return to the the "Pigeon Coop", namely the Mezritch Ghetto, in order to share the fate of the other Jews. Individuals did succeed when they were shipped off as christian workers to Germany, like Isser Bleiweiss's son and Shepsele Shtein's daughter.

There were Jews who gave their entire savings away to friendly christians in nearby villages and hid out alone there. But they could not stay long in such villages. The christian "friend" had found some way to make his Jew leave. Even in those cases where the christian did not behave this way, the Jew would often leave of his own accord, because they simply could not survive under such conditions; the end of the war was not yet in sight and the christian was subject to execution for keeping a Jew. Having heard that things were still quiet in Mezritch, the Jew got out and returned to the ghetto. At this time there was no shortage of Jewish victims in the villages around Mezritch. This is when the hiding place of Moshe Kreiselman was discovered in the village of Rogozneczka together with his family. All were shot. And in the village of Puchacz two Jews were shot to death.

At about the same the bloody tiger, Heine, was called away from Mezritch. He was replaced by the Gestapo man, Diete, who was rather calm German not drunk on blood like Heine had been. He never shot his victims alone, but rather ordered other to do the shooting. ... as they used to say that he had been a judge by profession.

The Jews yearned to survive the new year 1943. Nearly everyone was of the opinion that anyone who survived the bleak year 1942 would remain alive for good. People convinced themselves that the German thought: If after all the actions, after all the suffering a large number of Jews remained alive, they should stay alive as slave labor.

When I fled the execution place in Biala and arrived on the evening of Sunday, December 20 in the Mezritch Ghetto, Jewish life there was truly vibrant, although the people did feel as if they had suffered enormously from the fourth action, which had just ended.

A few days after my arrival, a serious panic broke out in the Mezritch Ghetto. People again went into hiding; the ghetto was deserted. A rumor had spread that the Nazis wanted to take all the remaining Jews away to a camp at Trawniki near Lublin.

It turned out that the S.S. officer Bartechko had arrived from the Trawniki Camp in order to transfer the pig-hair factory together with its workers, who were

employed under the supervision of the German Kurt de Lauer and who had thought themselves to privileged until now.

The taking of the workers alone would have been a heavy blow for the ghetto. The prevalent view in the ghetto was that the reason Jews were still living in Mezritch was due to the pig-hair factory. If the factory were to be liquidated, so it they argued, the whole Jewish community of Mezritch would also be liquidated. The removal of the workers to Trawniki was soon felt in the economic arena as well, since the workers, the so-called "Kurt de Lauer Boys" had been the best situated class in the ghetto. They traded secretly with the christians and thanks to them most of the ghetto had a little bread to eat.

The workers themselves did not have have any strong desire to leave the ghetto. They had overcome the problem of being separated from their relatives together with whom they had withstood the worst.

After long negotiations with S.S. officer Bartechko and after all the efforts of the Kurt de Lauer company, about 500 workers led by factory manager Avraham Feierman had to take up the wanderer's stick and made the journey to work at the pig-hair factory at Trawniki. Their wives and children also went along; there was no lack of volunteers. The factory machinery was also transferred to Trawniki.

Although enough workers from the business still remained in Mezritch, the pig-hair factory was all but liquidated.

Among those who considered themselves to be Kurt De Lauer workers were those who years before had been Yeshiva students in Mezritch together with the Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Dovidl of Kletzk. Even in the most difficult of times, Rabbi Dovidl had managed to study Torah with his pupils. He used to try to make the hard life of his students a little easier and he always used the support which he enjoyed among the Mezritch population for their benefit. There were boys among the Yeshiva students who had already jumped a few times from the trains to Treblinka, including one handicapped jumper who had a wooden leg.

Rabbi Dovidl was deeply loved in the ghetto and people used to delight in his sayings. But now even Rabbi Dovidl had to gather his belongings and let himself be taken away to Trawniki. People used to ask him: "Well, Reb Dovidl, are we going to Trawniki?" to which he used to answer: "What do they want from me now in this Trawniki? That is really a resort town--if I would have a desire for country house, I will travel all summer to get there." He never went.

The bunch of Jews in the Mezritch Ghetto had one goal at the end of 1942: to make it to the New Year. And so they dragged themselves into the new year. The last day of December of the old bloody year 1942 passed into history.

I left my friends' home and half kidding and pointed out to them that if they wanted to hear some shooting in the middle of the night, they should not be frightened. It was Sylvester {New Year's Eve} and in the christian world there is a custom to welcome the new year with a shooting spree. What better than this to meet a good guest?... [transl.???].

I certainly did not intend for my words to come true; but just at that moment shooting broke out loudly in the Sylvester night, which did not signal the arrival of the new year but rather bade farewell to a dozen Jewish lives.

When we went out the next morning into the narrow streets of the Ghetto we came upon Jewish corpses and frozen streaks of blood in the white snow. These people had not been destined to survive the new year in the "New Europe."

What had happened here on Sylvester night?

The Biala Gestapo squad had decided to honor the arrival of the new year by getting a little drunk. A thought flashed in the minds of the degenerates.-- What a shame it is to shoot in the air, let us make the Jews of Mezritch jump a little. -- They got into an automobile and arrived in the ghetto exactly at 12 midnight. They began to welcome in the New Year, which had just crawled through the barbed wire of the ghetto, by cutting off Jewish lives from the world.

Who knows how the bloody balance of the action in the holiday night would have turned out, had not Gestapo man Dieter come running into the Ghetto to remind his friends that the ghetto actually belonged to the Radzin Gestapo. Only the latter was authorized to arrange a hunt for ghetto property...

The first day of the new year 1943. It was freezing outdoors, the panes of the ghetto's windows were cast in frost, the roofs were covered with snow-white carpets. Around and around whisked the white snow, in which a cart cut a path, carrying the victims of the Sylvester Night out of the ghetto. A few bloodied bodies of women and children lay on the cart in tattered clothing; they were not fated to cross the threshold of the New Year.

Among the victims on the cart I saw friends with whom I only spoke the day before. It seemed to me that my friend, Zisl Rozmarin (from the Sirkus home) was sun deep in sleep. Perhaps if I gave him just a little shove he would wake up. Sluve Konn's head was smashed in, as if it had been struck by a dumb-dumb bullet. There were the flayed [transl.???] bodies of Mrs. Scheinberg (nee Wirenitzka), Mrs. Rosen (nee Rosenbojm) and of a young man named Gendsel from Yanewe, whom the murderers had shot dead on the street. The sight of the bloody mass that had been the two children of the Biala painter, Hayim Knizhnik was bone-chilling. Their mother had been shot about that time at a Polish police station for having been caught outside the ghetto buying something for her children.

The cart rolled slowly onward to the cemetery outside the ghetto unaccompanied by a soul. The gravedigger, Edelbojm (Levi Yitzhak's brother) sat atop cart, while the second gravedigger Velvl Zuckerman walked alongside. Soon they will have taken care of everything; they will have shoveled the frozen clumps of earth over the dead bodies; in the name of the surviving families they would let forth a groan over the mass grave. The clothes of the dead would be returned to the warehouse. It is wartime and everything has a value for Germany. The clothes are stripped off the slain--they would later find their way to Germany.

In the ghetto the respect for the majesty of death was lost. What did one used to do in Mezritch when someone passed away? They had always eulogized the departed, during the funeral procession the stores used to be closed, when the procession passed by. Today who give a eulogy? Who even bothers to look at these farm wagons that carry the bloodied victims like calves from the slaughterhouse? Death has become commonplace here.

Does the death factory at Treblinka have to swallow up everything? Too often a contingent of blood is supplied for this small local branch of Treblinka--the local [house of the living???].

When a Jew was caught outside the ghetto, he was taken to the Polish police station. Were a Jew to go out of the ghetto for a few small sticks of wood from his own apartment just to warm his frozen limbs, he would be arrested for a felony and taken to the Polish police station, whence noone ever returned home. Frequently you would see the carts slipping out of the Polish police station with a delivery of bloody corpses for the Jewish cemetery. This is how Mrs. Miriam Listgarten and her daughter Itke Platt as well as Leah Knizhnik, among others, were shot.

It was rare that they shot a single Jew. They would collect together a large number of Jews and then the concrete of the police yard would be filled with blood, which the Jews would then have to wash off. The wagon made its way slowly, leaving behind a tiny trickle of human blood on the white snow...

The executions were conducted in large part by the gendarme murderer, Franz Bauer, who punished his victims with a sadistic passion. Sometimes a few of these reacted quite sharply. The proud young woman, Leah Goldman, for example, spat him in the face before she died.

And because all decency before death had been lost and because of the ambivalence to the carnage, one used to ask his neighbor: "Well, how many have they rolled off today?" Or, "How many have they put in cold storage today?"

[HERE INSERT MAP OF MEZRITCH ON P. 171 WITH THE FOLLOWING CAPTION:

"PLAN OF A PART OF MEZRITCH. IN THE CENTER, THE JEWISH GHETTO, MARKED WITH DIAGONAL STRIPES.

(TAKEN FROM THE MEZRITCH MAGISTRAT AFTER THE LIBERATION)"].

When death is cheapened, how much can the lives of a dozen men be worth? Particularly, when anyone can meet the same fate any minute.

When someone died a natural death, they used to say that he must have been a saint, since he had to have earned special merit with God.

The number of "saints" grew regularly. After weeks of lying in hideouts, people were soiled, infested with lice and mangy. Typhus began to rage in the cramped, filthy houses of the ghetto. In many home you could see people who had died of typhus just lying there; you could see two typhus victims in the same bed. In one tiny cottage, two diseased women were lying together in bed; death had already spread its wings over one; the gravedigger was so busy that there was no one to come and take the dead woman away. The other woman who started gradually to recover lay next to her dead companion for two days. Every so often she would glance at her dead neighbor and then turn her head quickly away.

After the bloody shooting rampage on New Year's Eve, every subsequent shot at night brought instant panic in the ghetto. Just one person had to hear some kind of a shot, and the whole room of people would be alarmed. They would get dressed quickly and crawl into the hiding place where they would lie for hours in tension and terror. When they sensed that everything was quiet again, they would crawl back out of their holes; but sleep was almost out of the question. They would wait up fully dressed until morning, so that they would know immediately whether something had happened... .

At the slightest rustle, one would rouse his neighbor. Everyone would stand up. Mothers would tend to their children as they slept [transl???]. When it turned out that nothing had happened, the mother would stand and wait by her child for hours until he would awake.

In the wake of the execution of the workers from our camp in Biala, the Gestapo workers in the Biala ghetto had resigned themselves to the same fate. For this reason the group leaders, Yitzhak Ekstein, Shlomo Steingart, Shimshon Justman and the Schneiderman brothers all escaped from the camp.

Yitzhak Ekstein came directly to the Mezritch ghetto. Apparently, someone had informed the Biala Gestapo that he had arrived in Mezritch with the result that they demanded that he be sent back. The Jewish Police arrested him and turned him over to the Polish Police. They in turn delivered him to the Biala Gestapo.

Early one morning all the ghetto workers were assembled in the Gestapo courtyard at the Raabe Factory to see them drag out Ekstein who had been severely

beaten. The Gestapo-Commissar Stillhammer ordered the Jewish workers to kill Ekstein. But they refused. "If you are afraid of the Jewish God," shouted Stillhammer, "then we will beat him to death." Several of the Gestapo men took sticks and actually smashed his body to bits. Ekstein was buried by a fence next to Raabe's factory.

The Jewish Council began functioning again and there was no lack of work.

Emerging from their hideouts following the fourth action, people thought as always that there would be a brief respite before the fifth action would come. People would go on a binge of eating and drinking, throwing away their last few zlotys. But now when the expected fifth action did not materialize, many people found themselves stuck in the ghetto without means to exist. The transfer of Kurt de Lauer's workers to Trawniki dealt a major economic blow to the ghetto.

Under the energetic leadership of Shimon Kleinbojm from Radzin and Moshe Zuberman from Mezritch, the Jewish Council was able to establish welfare committees for the homeless from all towns. The Jewish Council, in an attempt to keep life in the ghetto as normal as possible, was able without much effort, to make bread and potatoes available at affordable prices.

Every day groups of workers who were employed at various German companies left the ghetto. There was a camp at the German Command post on Lublin Street where the regimen was somewhat less severe. Workers there were able to smuggle different goods into the ghetto. Searches were conducted frequently at the ghetto entrance and the goods were confiscated. Most of the time the searches were carried out by the Nazis, but on more than one occasion the Jewish Police turned out at the ghetto entrance to get what they could.

A small hospital for typhus patients was set up in the ghetto, along with an infirmary for outpatients, all under the direction of Dr. Kozes. All medical services were offered at normal cost and the poor received free care in the main.

Life began to return to normal for the roughly 5,000 Jewish souls in the ghetto, each one of whom was nothing more than a remnant of a whole family. There were people from approximately 70 towns in Poland and Slovakia in the Mezritch Ghetto.

A spark of hope began to beam in the ghetto. People would snatch newspapers right out your hand just to see what was going on in the world, although Jews had been holding a lot closer without the newspapers having been helped [transl???], "Yaakov the Thief, said in his papers. Even on the basis of the one-sided German news, Jews were able to discern the German defeats. The Soviet Army had taken the offensive and people were fantasizing that they would continue to advance, they could be free by Pesakh. Even the British had beaten the Germans in Libya. All signs pointed to the end of the war. The only question was whether

Hitler would let us be there when it did end; we were unfortunately still in his hands. But by and large the Jews had faith and were full of hope notwithstanding all they had been through! In the meantime the Germans were lamenting their defeat at Stalingrad and the Jews were overjoyed with revenge.

My father had by now recovered from the gunshot wounds he received at the execution site in Biala. My brother had arrived in the ghetto from Biala where he had lived as an Aryan thanks to a Polish identity card and had worked for his former employer, the Ethnic German, who had since been called to military duty. Deprived of his employer, he was forced to come here to the barbed wire of the ghetto.

The Polish Police had for a long time been conducting an investigation in the ghetto into the Jews from Adamow near Lukow. In the beginning no one understood why they were so interested in the Adamow Jews. Later the reason became clear: In the fall of 1942, the Jews of Adamow had been assembled in the marketplace so that they could be resettled. The Jews had attacked the Polish Police, who were in charge of carrying out the resettlement, took their weapons and fled to the nearby forests.

Hayim Puckhatsher (from the village of Pukhatsh outside of Mezritch), whom I met in the ghetto, told me that Zileh Gutenberg's Jewish fighters had spent some time in his area. Their sojourn turned out to be rather short, however, when Russian prisoners-of-war, who had themselves escaped from German POW camps, seized their weapons and later killed them all.

Having left the Jews in the ghetto alone for a while, the Germans could not stomach a few individuals in the ghetto and started a bloody orgy.

The shooting death of the Jewish policeman, Shimon Goldman, on a dark February night in the ghetto served to set off the bloodbath. At first they held a young man from Lukow on suspicion of murder. But later Goldman's family accused the Jewish policeman Yisrael Leizer Yazhimowsky of the murder.

A few days after the murder, on a Friday evening, all Jewish policemen were summoned for a meeting at the local post of the Jewish Police on Piekarska Street. When all the policemen had been assembled, the Gestapo man, Dieter, entered the room and commanded the abovementioned Yisrael Leizer Yazhimowsky to tie up the hands of 11 policemen with ropes and with the help of several other policemen led them off to the Polish Police station. After he held there under arrest for some two weeks, 10 men were shot to death early one Shabbat morning. Only the Jewish policeman, Eliyahu Goldman, a brother of the murdered Shimon Goldman, was released. Among the Jewish policemen murdered that day was their commander, Hayim Brukazh, Iltshe Turkeltojb, Finkelstein from Lublin and others. Afterwards people in the ghetto muttered that Yazhimowsky had a hand in Goldman's murder. They said that he had wanted to be commander of the Jewish Police, which wish was granted soon after the shooting of the 10 policemen.

Yisrael Leizer Yazhimowsky, an underworld figure, now that he had grabbed the power began ruling the ghetto with an iron hand. It was at this time that the Jewish Police was completely independent of the Jewish Council and did whatever it wanted to do.

Yazhimowsky set about robbing the homeless Jews about whom he had received information that they were holding foreign currency and valuable jewelry. As we later learned, he did not spare his fellow Mezritch landsleit either. And so he confiscated a few expensive diamonds from Mrs. Sarah Stein. In carrying out this work, he took as partner a Jewish policeman from Komarowka. This is how he robbed the Bialans, Yithak Fogel, Henekh Kahan, Shimshon Justman, the Schneiderman brothers and others.

Yazhimowsky's thievery was well known to Moshe Kravietsky and Avraham Zuckerman, policemen who had borne a grudge against Yisrael Leizer and besides had themselves desired the post of police commandant. They set a series of traps for Yazhimowsky until one Shabbat he was finally arrested. After a short time sitting at the Polish police station under arrest, Yazhimowsky told his interrogators that if they would let him back into the ghetto, he would show them the hideout where Natan Finkelstein (who had been an official at the Labor Office) was hiding. They had been searching for Finkelstein for some time. The authorities agreed to go along and at about noon on a Friday the Schutzpolizei Bok brought up Yisrael Leizer and took him to the ghetto in handcuffs. He actually did show them the hideout whence they dragged out the abovementioned Finkelstein.

In the meantime, Yazhimowsky seized the opportunity, opened a window in the room where the hideout had been located and climbed out into the street where he disappeared.

A search was commenced to find Yisrael Leizer. It was clear that he had hidden himself somewhere in the ghetto, since being handcuffed he could not have managed very well to climb over the barbed wire fence. Once Schutzpolizei Bok realized that Yazhimowsky had slipped out of his hands, he issued an order on the spot that Yisrael Leizer was to be delivered to him in an hour's time. In case he was not turned, he threatened to shoot 500 Jews in the ghetto.

Panic spread in the ghetto as everyone dashed for their hiding places. The Jewish police began combing the ghetto for Yisrael Leizer but without success.

Some lady said that she had seen Yisrael Leizer run past near Lempert's house next to the ghetto fence. That was enough for Schutzpolizei Bok to select out a few people from the house and shoot them dead on the spot. Among the victims were the Biala residents Avraham Ezra Handelsman (the butcher) and Blima Preter (wife of commissar Joseph Preter). Who knows how the whole matter might have ended up had a young girl not pointed out that Yazhimowsky was hiding in an attic of a house just next to the Lemperts.

Schutzpolizist Bok went up to the attic together with the chief of the criminal police, Zhamski, who found Yisrael Leizer hiding in a trunk. They commanded him to come down from the attic but he refused to obey. He begged Zhamski to shoot him there in the attic, a request which Zhamski quickly fulfilled. During his burial they found stolen diamonds and gems on Yisrael Leizer's body.

A few days after Yisrael Leizer's arrest, they also arrested his wife and the Jewish policeman from Komarowka. After Yazhimowsky's death, they too were executed in the yard of the Polish police station.

The authorities emptied out Yisrael Leizer's apartment and in the courtyard dug up a leather pouch with money, and Aryan identity cards that Yazhimowsky had had prepared for himself.

Spring ripped into the filthy, narrow streets of the ghetto. The warm, bright rays of sunshine beckoned everything to life. Reluctantly our hearts grew lighter. The Jews of Mezritch hoped that they would not wipe out this last tiny group of ghetto Jews (but Hitler would do just that)--naturally the Jew had to have an excuse for the world.

The Jewish Council tried hard not to spoil the arrival of spring, whose magic did not distinguish between the ghetto and the other part of town--and thus initiated a spring clean-up campaign. A short while later the ghetto had been completely transformed. It was clean and neat everywhere. The tiny ghetto streets were alive, although the Jewish Police did permit anyone to linger in the streets, so that the Germans would not think that we were alive.

Jews were fascinated with politics. Hope was rekindled when the British together with the Americans decimated the Axis forces at Tunis. Maybe we would not have to wait long before their invasion of Europe.

"Never mind that we may still be eating matzos with the Germans at Passover," the Jews told themselves, "we will soon be eating butter cookies at R. Yossel's Shavuot table."

With all the Hitler propaganda that filled the few pages of the wretched paper, why weren't they sounding the victory trumpets yet? When the story of Katin broke the papers were full of material. They drummed on about this day in and day out, but in doing so did not forget the Jews. Vicious Jew-baiting began which could only have served to poison the minds of the christian population even further.

We, Jews, did not overlook the fact that the bodies of some 12,000 Polish officers had been discovered, including a number having distinctively Jewish names. It was not up to us to judge who had carried out this bloody slaughter. We, Jews,

were opposed altogether to such orgies and we deplored murder under any circumstances. Whoever was guilty of murdering the Polish military personnel we could not determine, but another aspect of the question interested us: the Germans cried that the world had not seen such barbarity; how could they have such a distorted view [farshtokhene oygen, transl???]. Bloodthirsty Germany had slaughtered millions of people and was murdering more without end--yet Germany still has the chutzpah to shout about barbarity!

True, in Treblinka where millions of Jews were already resting eternally, it was done with greater skill. Try, be efficient and find some trace of human life there? Try searching the newspapers for names of the identified dead. Perform a miracle and find the mail for those who had been punished in Treblinka.

Pesakh time was approaching, which could still be sensed in the ghetto. Despite all their travail, the Jews still tried to get special permission to bake matzahs and succeeded in getting it. The Jewish Council prepared a Pesakh-action to be able to help the needy in the ghetto as much as possible.

Jews hurried off to work outside the ghetto, although their wages were being held by the Radzin Gestapo. Jews were really nothing more than slaves. But these slaves proved themselves capable of supporting themselves from this unpaid labor, because everyone was able to buy something from the Christians while at work. In the fenced-in ghetto, if one only had money, he could get everything his heart desired.

Soon the spring was in full bloom. People began casting off their winter clothing, windows were thrown open to let in a little fresh air into the cramped quarters. One would stand at the ghetto's barbed wire fence and observe how the neighboring meadow, through which the blue river snaked its way, had already turned green. The trees too were covered with green foliage. Wherever the Jew did not dare step, everything was turning green.

My gaze fell upon a speeding train and images of the never far-removed reality came back to me. They ripped open the wound in my heart that had never healed. Memories of springtime a year ago stirred within me. It was on this train that I had come from Biala to Mezritch to see my never-to-be forgotten wife. Our family had been in tact at that time; no one had even dreamed of the tragic end to come. Oh, what a happy time that had been.

In the midst of this beautiful spring, word arrived that there was unrest in Warsaw. Just what why this was happening was difficult to discern. The news and rumors came from Christians and one rumor was more fantastic than the next. Some said that tanks had entered the ghetto, because the Jews were supposed to have killed several gendarmes. Others told us that German aircraft had bombed the ghetto which was up in flames.

What was clear was that something was happening in the Warsaw Ghetto. Maybe Treblinka was back in action again? After a winter respite, the grave digging machines were again ripping open graves in the earth for those of us who were still alive.

As it turned out, the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto would not let themselves be liquidated and put up resistance. This was verified by the not very clever Schutzpolizist Bok who represented the Gestapo man, Dieter, in ghetto matters. He called upon the Jewish Police force to make sure that there were no weapons, God forbid, in the ghetto--because, he said, "your brothers in the Warsaw ghetto were eliminated summarily for possessing arms."

All over the ghetto feathers floated, turning the streets white as if covered with snow. They were emptying out the warehouses of the last Jewish possessions and sending them to Germany. The effort to transport the property to the trains went on at a rapid pace. Some pillows were ripped apart and the wind scattered the feathers over the ghetto streets.

Pesakh passed. This time the normally festive holiday was a sad one.

Soon after Pesakh, on Wednesday, April 28, 1943, a panic broke out in the ghetto: the Gestapo accompanied by Ukrainian guards had arrived in town. We heard that 50 freight cars were supposed to have been ordered for the train station.

People started running around from one to the next trying to find out what was going on. Several Jewish policemen left the ghetto. Upon returning they confirmed that the Gestapo and Ukrainians had indeed come, but that this had nothing to do with the Jews, since they were carrying out an action in several nearby villages.

Later we learned that only 12 freight cars had been ordered to the train station for Friday. The Gestapo man, Dieter, assured us that the trains had been mistakenly ordered by the Lublin S.S. in order to transport the contents of the local warehouses, because they had not known that the property had already been sent off to Lublin several days earlier. When asked why an eleventh car with passenger benches had been ordered, he had a ready answer. Since in the past such freight trains had been robbed, they had added a car for a crew to protect the transport.

In the wake of this explanation, the tension eased considerably, particularly after Friday had passed uneventfully.

There was in the Mezritch Ghetto a young man from Wohin by the name of Shalom Tshenky, who had good connections with the Radzin Gestapo and especially with the Gestapo man, Dukau, who also came from Wohin. It was said that the two had known each other since childhood. When the Bolsheviks came to Wohin in 1939, the Jew supposedly saved the Gestapo man's life. We could see that the Jew was considered a privileged character by the Gestapo and that the relations between him and the above-mentioned Gestapo man were very friendly. This young man

was rather different from all the other "machers" who had access to the "Upper Window." He helped Jews whenever he could and never asked anything in return.

That week the Gestapo man, Dukau, came to Mezritch and the young man Tshenky complained about why he had not been told anything about the seriousness of the situation. The Gestapo man calmed him down saying that there was nothing going on and nothing would happen to him. "Shalom," he finished saying, "I want you to live many years after the war. Would I ever allow anything bad happen to you?"

TREBLINKA REVISITED

A. The Fifth Action

That Friday passed peacefully. People breathed a little more easily. On Shabbat you could steal time for a little walk around the ghetto streets which were bathed in sunlight. The lovely May sun warmed everything up wonderfully. Suddenly after noon, a black cloud appeared in the form of a rumor that something new was about to happen.

Once again a nervous tension arose until one began to get details of what was going on. The rumor first originated when the chief of the Schutzpolizei, Genade, suddenly picked up his not-yet ready laundry, from the Jewish seamstress, Gishe Leah Appelbojm. And second when the Schutzpolizei, Gendarmes and Polish Police were placed on alert.

This set off a whole range of arguments and attempts to ascertain what the situation really was. Rather than think the worst, the helpless Jews chose to link these evil rumors to others. "So what," these Jews said to themselves, "they don't intend any of this for us. If it was because of us, the 72 Schutzpolizei would come in singly rather than in groups as they were now doing; we pose no threat, G-d forbid, to them." They believed that the Germans had decided to take extra precautions on account of the Poles national May Day holiday.

Among the Jewish police, where one could sometimes get information about forthcoming events, they also were of the view that nothing was going to happen. We went to sleep a little more calm.

The residents of the ghetto were fast asleep. Only a very few people stayed awake. Suddenly there was a loud banging at the entrance to our apartment--"Get dressed! The ghetto is surrounded!"

The impact drove us out of our beds. We got dressed at a gallop and soon were standing with our neighbors in the courtyard. The first shots scattered in the quiet May night. We lifted up our heads and convinced ourselves that the ghetto was really guarded by Schutzpolizei.

Now it was certain, that the fifth action in the chain of bloody spectacles in Mezritch had begun (Sunday, May 2, 1943, 27 Nissan 5703). It was still night. You could not see anyone in the ghetto, but they were looking for a doctor, because there were two people here who had been wounded by the shooting in the ghetto: Mishel Weinberg, the gravedigger, and the Jewish policeman, Aba Weinzeig. Weinberg had been wounded slightly in the foot, but Weinzeig had been wounded seriously in the abdomen.

We all stood in the room and counseled each other on what we should do. There was a little hiding place in our place.

I stated that I did not want to go to the hideout and would report to the assembly point. I explained that in the first place, the hideout was not safe; second, we would suffocate in there, and third, I would be taking less of a risk jumping from the train than lying in the hideout. My decision was also influenced by a little calculation. There were in fact about 5,000 people in the ghetto, but the Gestapo only knew about 3,000. You did not need several actions to take care of 3,000 people. Three thousand was an average number for a single action. What would a Jew coming out of a ghetto do when the Ghetto was Judenrein?

From my perspective, everyone had lost the desire to go down into the wet hole. Incidentally, my brother's mother- and sister-in-law had absolutely no intention of saving themselves, wanting only to rest in peace at Treblinka together with their loved ones. They conducted themselves with pride and dignity until the last time we saw each other, when we were separated at the trains. It was simple to be jealous of these women. The most moving of all was the demeanor of small orphan from Warsaw, who was with us. He could not speak Yiddish, yet he still was able to grasp what was happening. With great self-confidence he called out to my brother's mother-in-law: "Auntie! I want to go to Treblinka, where my father lies."

In contrast to the young orphan, there was the boy Dovidl Jagoda, who had lived together with us and who cried out: "No, I am not going to Treblinka! I am going to jump from the train and get to my brother, who lives in a village."

Just at that moment there flashed before my eyes an image of a similar scene that must have taken place some eight months earlier when my wife and little girl had stood there helplessly and not knowing what to do.

My father, brother and I divided up the money we had saved, leaving my father with the largest share together with all the jewelry. We also put tools in our pockets with which to be able to open the freight car and be prepared for the march that lay ahead.

As we were standing there in the room, some strange people came in and begged us to let them hide out in our hiding place. Among them was Mrs. Mindel Nortman from Biala and her son. We told them, "Please, be our guest." However, they were so astonished at our willingness to let them into the hole that they left the room.

In the Ghetto the last efforts were under way to get into the hideouts. Only a few people were running in the streets to friends' houses in order to hide themselves or in search of a hiding place. A nervous silence hung over the whole ghetto--the

quite before the storm. Noone knew yet what they actually had in store for us. Were we destined for Treblinka or a labor camp?

Then we heard someone shouting in Yiddish: "All Jews to the Ghetto gate!" We started walking to the gate. A farewell look at the decrepit little house that had cuddled us for these several months. We left everything behind and only locked the door. "Maybe a miracle will happen and we will be able to cross your threshold once again, you wretched, ruined little cottage," we all thought.

As I walked out into the street, I recognized the chairman of the Jewish Council, the pharmacist, Shimon Klarberg. He was not dressed properly. It was in just such a condition that the Lublin Gestapo had driven him from his home and sent him into the ghetto to summon the Jews to assemble at the exit gate.

I said hello to him and noticed that he was seriously depressed. His face told me that there was nothing good happening here. When I asked him how the situation seemed to him, he answered: "It's all over."

At the gate only a few people still had assembled. Almost all of them without baggage. Every one was certain where this voyage was headed. "Why should we drag bags with us?"

You see scenes, all too familiar from previous actions.

A mother carries an infant in her arms. A father stands next to his weeping little daughter, who, having been rudely awakened from her sleep, can't seem to get control of herself and who doesn't realize that tomorrow at this time she will have fallen into eternal sleep in a mass-grave at Treblinka... Mrs. Levenberg (Avraham Aharon's wife) from Biala is dragging her little grandson by the hand (the youngest son of Matke Nortman, who was taken to Treblinka on October 6, 1942), who was just learning to take his first wobbly steps. His mother is probably off somewhere searching for a hiding place.

Mrs. Hayele Levenberg from Biala (nee Rosenzweig) goes by with her youngest son. Their husband and father has in the meantime run off looking for a hideout for them. She anxiously looks in all directions to see if he has returned.

Here come some people carrying a sick, young man who in the last hours of his life would rather go to far off Treblinka than meet death in his bed.

The fences around the ghetto were thickly manned with Schutzpolizei. The laborer, Velvel Tshemni, who worked with them, tries to find something out from them, but the German police shrug their shoulders saying they know nothing.

The Ghetto gate is wide open. In march in armed Ukrainians led by the local gendarmarie with the infamous murderer Franz Bauer at the front. He walks

haughtily with his head cocked high smiling broadly. Bauer is carrying a big machine gun, a revolver on his hip and a grenade under his [trans???--pasek].

A few high-ranking Gestapo murderers are walking around in the ghetto casting wolfish glances in every direction.

The Jews assembled at the gate are ordered to march to the marketplace which had already witnessed terrifying events and where Jewish blood had been spilled in abundance. A Gestapo man counts us and jots down a figure. There must be order and accounting, even when it concerns packing off human beings to the next world. Soon he turns over the counting and calculation to a young Jewish man.

The town is still asleep. Today after all is a day of rest, Sunday. A few awakened Aryans poke their heads out of the window, understand quickly what is happening and go back to sleep.

. They order us to sit down in the marketplace opposite the church. Jews are thronging everywhere from the ghetto to the marketplace. Among them are a few severely battered Jews who had been discovered in hiding places. This is how they chase and regularly beat Hayim Greenberg, the manufacturer, who was found completely covered with feathers, as it turned out, and pulled out of his hiding place.

Meanwhile a Gestapo man joined in the work at the marketplace. He selected out the pig-hair workers and other tradespeople and put them specially aside. This means that those who had been selected out would be sent to Trawniki while the rest everybody knew where they would be sent--to Treblinka.

While this was going on, we heard the frightening sound of shooting coming from the ghetto. We also heard a grenade exploding. It was clear that the vampire Bauer was controlling the ghetto with all his savagery and that the streets were now flowing with the blood of Jewish martyrs.

At the marketplace, everyone was trying to avoid the trip to Treblinka and to substitute for it a trip to anywhere else. Several Jews paid for this with their lives. Those who wanted to go to work, or those who stood up and begged to be sent over with the fortunate ones standing off to the side, drove the Gestapo man wild and he ordered them to fall out. A single pistol shot would be fired into an entire crowd of people and a life would be cut down.

No were women were selected for the group of artisans. They were not necessary. Their place was in the dark graves of Treblinka.

Schutzpolizei were now leading those few privileged families to the marketplace, who had been able to live outside the Ghetto the entire time. This served further to confirm the impression that Mezritch was now sharing the same fate as those other cities in Poland, which were already Judenrein.

The dentist together with his wife, who had lived outside the Ghetto, joined the group of artisans, and were beaten murderously for having done so. They were forced to join the masses of Jews sitting in the square, who tomorrow would be resting in eternal piece in the same place were their loved ones had already been killed. When the Gestapo asked the dentist whether he would agree to travel to Trawniki alone, he answered, "Yes." The dentist doffed his hat and thanked the murderer for his mercy. He left his wife and went over to the fortunate group of artisans. Yes, he was now one of the "rescued ones." His wife would have to make the pilgrimage to Treblinka.

Moshe Zuckerman, the tanner, stayed with his family. He was was a noted personality with the Germans, on account of his tannery from which he was able frequently to deliver valuable gifts to the Nazis. His workers, who had in the meantime been selected to go to Trawniki, called for him to join them. But he had no intention of doing this. He had lived with this wife for some thirty odd years, he called out, and he was not going to part from her now!

The high-ranking foreigners made a fuss over the tanner Zuckerman, reading a paper he was showing them with particular attention. He along with his wife, son, and son-in-law were transferred to the workers group. But two of his daughters were left behind for the death factory. Zuckerman's fatherly heart could not stay still, this time too he wanted to get out whole from this bloody strife and began making attempts to free his two daughters. The result was tragic.

The Gestapo troops could not put with this Jew's chutzpa. On account of his demands to have his daughters be with him, the director of the action invited him into the the ghetto. He let Zuckerman walk a bit ahead of him not far from the out-of-service well on Brisker Street. There was a shot; Zuckerman fell dead on the stones, with a bullet hole in his neck.

The Jews who saw this understood that they would not be staying in Mezritch, if this could happen to Moshe Zuckerman, who had enjoyed such a privilege status with the murderers, how could they dare have any hope, these poor, little people? That Moshe Zuckerman was so highly respected by the Germans, is evidenced by the fact that notwithstanding all the resettlements, his house remained outside the ghetto and was guarded by Schutzpolizei to make sure that nothing would happen to Zuckerman and his family.

The chairman of the Jewish Council was taken care of the same way. A gunshot in the back of his neck put an end to his life. A day before noone in Mezritch would have believed it possible. If Zuckerman won special privileges because of his leather, the chairman of the Jewish Council, Mag.[?] Shimon Klarberg had yet still more; thus he was allowed to keep his pharmacy open, for example, until the last days, earning him the respect of the authorities. Frequently Jews would

stand agape as he spoke with the murderers with such courage, driving the Germans mad with rage, but yet they did not dare to hurt him or cause him harm.

After they shot Moshe Zuckerman, his wife, son and son-in-law were taken from the worker group and returned to the masses sitting in the market place.

Meanwhile the brutal Bauer appeared in the square looking for new victims. Each time he would pick a new victim, take him to the ghetto gate whence we would hear a shot and would know that another life had been cut short from this world. This is how he took away the former prisoner-of-war and mason, Fishel, shooting him at the ghetto gate. The murderer also took the wife of the chairman of the Jewish Council out from the pharmacy and shot her to death.

Dr. Rubenstein broke away from those sitting in the square and ran to the group of artisans. He held up his medical diploma. Bauer noticed this and approached Dr. Rubenstein, took the diploma out of his hand, tore it into shreds and scattered it over the square.

My brother was picked to join the artisan group. I too tried to get into this group, but the Gestapo man did not like me. I tried a few times to slip away from the group of candidates for Treblinka. I saw how the scoundrel Bauer was holding his revolver just waiting for anyone to make a move. I gave up trying for the moment and decided to go with the transport to Treblinka and jump from the train.

The sun began to disappear. A gentle rain began to fall from the sky, thoroughly soaking us. Amidst the sitting throng there were a few pillows with infants who having cried so long for their mothers' breast, had no more strength to try. The rain had drenched the pillows and the tiny infants were actually floating in water. Some of their mothers were lying hidden in hiding places together with the memories of their little babes, or maybe the memory had already been extinguished by murderous bullet? Esther and Leibl Goldman's baby was lying next to us.

It was now well after twelve noon and all the rucus around us continued without end. People began to ask for permission to go the bathroom. The Gestapo man was so kind-hearted that he let some people move away from the mass of people sitting in the square and take care their needs under guard in the middle of the marketplace. And noone was embarrassed. For what should we be be ashamed of, we thought [transl.???].

The Ukrainians, with their leader, Yur, who had just come back from the ghetto, pockets filled with booty, walked around the square with clubs and beat the sitting Jews mercilessly. One crude S.S. man went around with a rubber hose that was 4 - 5 centimeters thick and beat the Jews incessantly. A Gestapo-man cheered him on, shouting: "Immer und fester!" [Harder, harder!]

It stopped raining. The sun began to emerge from behind the clouds and steam started to rise from our wet clothes.

Finally, we were ordered to get up and form lines of five men to a row. I stood with my father and cousin, Leah Nuchowitsch, and two other friends.

The workers were the first to be taken away. Where they were going we did not know. Afterwards, our procession began to make its way to the trains. We were guarded on all sides. Whoever lagged behind was shot dead on the spot. The side streets were lined with the dead, who lay in pools of blood.

Christians were strolling on the sidewalks. A few of them did not even want to look our way and hurried off. Others watch us with sadistic pleasure and fiendish smiles, as if to say: "We are finally rid of you." The marketplace began to empty out. Only the few pillows with infants remained. I looked back to see what would happen to them and watched as a Gestapo man approached them with a revolver in his hand. He shoots at the babies--the pillows become red with blood.

As I march with the crowd, sad memories and wild thoughts fill my mind. The sound of rifle shots wakes out of my reveries. A woman falls at my feet covered with blood...but the rows march on, leaving behind human bodies, convulsing and writhing in the agony of death.

The first rows have reached the freight cars, waiting for us with open doors. They will soon be locked tight, however, and we will be able to take our last glimpse of the world only through the tiny window. Images stir within me of a time eight months ago, when my beloved wife and little girl went through everything that I am experiencing today.

I walk, resigned, to the freight car, since everthing that I had loved and cherished has been lost.

We meet the workers group at the trains; they will likely travel on the same train. Their cars will be detached at Lukow. We will continue on to Treblinka, to be devoured come morning in the flames of the death camp, and the workers, they will be in Trawniki to live and work.

As we were being herded into the cars, the women and children were separated from the men. I was put in the last car of the train. Since we were only a small group of men, they put several women and children in our car. The cars were really spacious--about 60 persons to a car.

The atmosphere in our car was really not that bad. In the last hours of our lives we felt respectable. An elderly Jew had managed to take his tefillin along and he stood right there with them on offering up his daily thanksgiving to the Creator of the world...

Brandy was passed out to the Ukrainian guards on the platform. They finished the bottles on the spot. Soldiers were getting their final orders from the "Death-Heads" (S.S). They marched by our sealed cars, casting hate-filled glances at us through our tiny grated windows.

A few in the car, who had experience jumping, wanted to open the door already. We did not let them...it is too early. After every two cars of Jews, there is a third filled with Ukrainians. They are standing ready with loaded rifles to shoot any jumper.

A whistle, and the trains starts moving slowly from the station in the direction of Lukow. It picks up speed, the knocking of the wheels becomes louder. Although the window is tiny, one can still see how beautiful nature is in the awakening spring. The train speeds through green fields and forests. We breathe in the fresh air, instead of the infected air of the ghetto. If you would not know what your final destination actually is, the trip would be entirely different. The verses of the song come to mind:

"Wieder is der Mai gekumen
Mit zayn tzoyber, mit zayn pracht."

May has come again
With its magic and its magnificence.

Everything is awakening from the long winter sleep. The tiniest blade of grass is coming back to life! But we humans are being driven through this beautiful springtime out of this world, to be lowered into the graves of Treblinka. How many times have I already stood face to face with death? What more have I to do with this dirty world? For what do I have to strive to live? But because the murderers want to throw you into the pit, just that reason alone makes you want to go on living, even though there is no one or nothing to live for.

Before we had gone out into the marketplace, my father, my brother, my two friends from Biala, Shimshon Justman and Leibe Lichtenbojm (Leibe Mednik's grandson) and I decided to jump from the train and get to Biala to our former employer, the ethnic German, who had been discharged from the army. It is possible that we will succeed in getting ourselves set up in the hiding place, located in this workshop. If we don't meet up after jumping, we decided to meet in Biala at the ethnic German's place.

Just as the train started pulling away from the station, we got busy with opening the car door. We moved the door somewhat, creating a crack between the door and the wall of the car. Using a knife we start pushing out the hook which holds the chain that keeps the door from opening. The rocking of the train helps a lot--a few minutes later the chain is loose. We throw a belt onto the chain and after a

brief effort the chain is opened and the door is kicked away. The path is now cleared for the jump.

Everyone was trying to jump. Before we knew it, a few veteran jumpers were already out. A few others followed them. Many still remained in the car, including among them, quite a few young men who were saying that they were tired of all the torment. And in any case they had nowhere to go; they would rather to find peace where their loved ones were resting for eternity. This is how, Joseph Tishel, my comrade from the workers' camp explained it to me. A young girl asked: "I still want to live, throw me off the train, I don't want them to make soap out of me!" Dr. Kozes, who had been separated from his wife and child (they were in another car), paced nervously around the freight car. He could not decide whether or not to jump. So, too, Bluman, a member of the Radzin Jewish Council also was trying hard to jump--he had only one complaint: if the Radzin Gestapo would not have been able to find him during the action, he certainly would not have been here now in this car. The Nazis in the "Upper Window" had regularly assured him that as long as there were Jews in Radzin, he would also be able to stay in Mezritch; and there was still a group of Jewish workers lead by David Lichtenstein at the Gestapo in Radzin.

I forgot to say goodbye to my father, so what of it? In a few minutes, we will be together again anyway. I even wanted my father to be the first to jump, but I was not bold enough to tell him: "Father, you jump first." We had figured that by jumping first I would give him courage. How could I not count on my father, who after all had managed to walk all the way from the execution site in Biala to Mezritch with two bullet wounds in his foot, ahead of everybody?

At this point our friend, Shimshon Justman, jumped from the train. He was going to go with us to Biala--now it was my turn. I stand up on the train step--the train is travelling really fast. Looking out along the train, I saw a strange sight: people were falling from the train incessantly. There were frequent rifle shots, but this did not scare anyone.

The train started up a steep embankment and close to the freight car a deep ravine came into sight. I realized that this was the best spot to jump. I hooked the skirts of my longcoat with a belt so they would get in my way and jumped off the step into the ravine. I fell and pulled myself on all fours among the [lustes--transl????] of the ditch. When I lifted up my head, the train was already far away.

I tried to get up quickly and ran into the forest located on the edge of the rail line. I sensed a slight pain in several places. I surmised that I had bruised my left foot and hand and my forehead. Everything must have been relatively slight, since it did not prevent me from going on.

I started walking in the reverse direction once in the forest so that I could meet my friends and then together with them wait for my father. I met many of those who had jumped from the train in the forest, including Devorele Loew, Itta

Weinberg with a child, Zamdner and my friend, Shimshon Justman, who was lying unconscious. He stared at me with glazed eyes not knowing what had happened to him and where we was. I looked him over and noticed that he had injured his left hand badly during the jump--it had already turned black, as if it had been smeared with black coal. But when he heard that the Germans were coming, he got out of the place with us and started fleeing deep into the forest. Instead of Germans, it was only new jumpers. Everyone dragged himself exhausted, not knowing where to go. Up til now, those who had jumped had only one goal: Mezritch. Now that Mezritch was Judenrein, where could carry this bundle of broken bones? Moreover, there was no one here or anything with which to treat the wounded. You could hear the shouts and moaning of wounded jumpers who could not get up coming from the direction of the rail line. They had either been badly injured during the jump or had caught a bullet somewhere.

One could not stay long near the rail line, since a rail police patrol would be along soon. Besides them, peasant boys from neighboring villages had seen the jumpers. They were gathering in large numbers in the ravines by the rail line. They robbed any Jews they encountered. If they didn't find anything to steal, they would arrest the Jews and turn them over to the Germans. Jews would hide themselves in the woods right after jumping and would start moving only at night. After walking for kilometers in the forest, our group constantly increased in size. It was here that I met my cousin's husband, Avraham Nuchowitsch, Leibele Konstantiner, and others, who told us that several Christians had already robbed them.

We sat in the forest. Each one relates his experiences during this bloody day. It is now about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. As good as it is to be free in the forest, where are we to go? One day, maybe two, could one sit in the forest, but you had to leave sometime. They could catch you any minute...and one had to eat, too. Where could one take his first step?

I ran constantly around the edge of the woods, to see if my father was coming. I asked other Jews about him, but no one knew anything. I was sure that my father had jumped, but how could I be sure that his jump was successful? I did not ask about my brother in the meantime, since he had an identity card and did not need risk jumping. When his train (which would be travelling late at night in the direction of Lublin) would stop at a station, all he had to do was climb out of the freight car window, buy a ticket and travel calmly to Biala. At least this is what I told myself and tried to stay calm.

It was silent all around us--not even a breeze blew. It began to get dark and night began to rule the forest. For those who had a destination, albeit an illusion, there was no point in sitting here any longer. I could only hope that my father would meet some people who wanted to go in the direction of Mezritch and from there he would be able to reach Biala alone. My father is quite a courageous and swift walker.

My friend had in the meantime regained consciousness. His left hand hurt him terribly, he hung it in a sling and we got on our way.

There were seven of us in the group. We stayed close to the rail line so as not to lose our way, but we dared not walk too close to the tracks, since they were guarded at night by sentries. You paid with your life if you got too close to the line.

Our plan was to approach Mezritch, by-passing it on the right side (i.e. on the side of the railway). True, this was a little dangerous, but it was the shortest way.

There were villages along the route which we had to avoid. As a consequence, our route was lengthened by several kilometers. Each village had its night patrol which could arrest us and turn us over to the Germans. For every Jew turned in, they would get a few kilograms of sugar and a couple bottles of brandy, which was a relatively "high" price for a Jewish life at the time...

Seventeen kilometers lay between us and Mezritch. We should have been able to cover this distance in at most four hours time, even carrying the wounded. But on account of the detours, the distance was stretched to some twenty odd kilometers--even if we pressed on the entire night we would not reach our destination.

We were climbing through unfamiliar woods. Every crack of a branch or rustling of a leaf, struck our hearts like a hammer. We walked with our ears and eyes strained, detecting the slightest movement. We stopped often to listen and look around. It seemed as if there was a gendarme lurking behind every tree waiting to take your life away.

The silent, starry May night sky cloaked us and shrouded us from unwanted eyes.

We emerged from the forest into a wide field. Soon we found ourselves in cornfields, where the dew soaked our shoes and socks. From there we came to ploughed potato fields, where our shoes and socks were caked with wet earth. This made the going more difficult, especially for the wounded. We stopped often to rest stretching out on the fields. The night dew dampened our hot [transl.???], sweaty faces. The still low-lying corn stalks, which were just now sprouting from the earth, stroked us softly like a gentle breeze, rocking us to sleep. You could not lie long. Time was running out, and we had to hide ourselves out of sight before daybreak. We lifted ourselves slowly off the ground and started dragging our tired bodies onward.

The night is dark as we drag ourselves over meadows, streams and bogs. Our shoes and socks are already soaked through with water. Soon we come up to a ploughed field and we can hardly take another step.

We marched liked this again one more night until we finally came to the other side of Mezritch on the highway to Biala.

Adieu, Mezritch! I spent months with you. Why am I beyond your walls alive and why was fate so cruel to my unforgettable beloved and child? What's happening now, Mezritch, within your walls? Does a Jewish soul breathe yet somewhere in a hideout, filled with fear of the death that awaits it every minute?

It is hard to imagine Mezritch without Jews. The city had something specifically Jewish about it...every little corner was filled with Yiddishkeit.

B. IN BIALA

After wandering for four nights and after four days of lying hidden in the woods, without a scrap of bread or a drop of water, we finally arrived on Wednesday night at the outskirts of Biala. We began planning how to sneak into the town of our birth. We had to get somehow to the center of town and that was no easy task.

It was only in the middle of the night, when everyone and everything was fast asleep that we slipped through fields until we reached the first street of town: Sitniker Street. We took off our shoes and crept barefoot past the houses. We held our breath, our heart beating loudly, as we stole from door to door, one step at a time, until we reached the spot where we could hide out. We breathed a little easier. We crawled through a board and came to a shop which had once been the Nuchowitsch brothers' carpentry workshop (Yanewe Street near Yoel Shtromwasser's place on the courtyard). There was a hole under the shop where my friend had lain for several weeks the previous winter.

As we lay here alive in a grave, my friend began feeling various things in the darkness which he had left here that winter. He found everything in its place. This meant that noone had been in the grave and that it had not been discovered by anyone. My friend dusted off a bottle of black coffee which he had stored here. We greedily pressed the bottle to our lips and quenched our thirst.

We then fell asleep for a bit and when we awoke, the day had already in all its brilliance, casting several rays of sunshine into our grave.

The day went by slowly and lazily. We had to lie without moving, as if we were dead, because children were playing in the neighborhood. At the slightest slip, they might discover us.

At about six o'clock in the evening I crawled out of the grave and went into the workshop, to meet the Ethnic German. Walking through the yard, I noticed that he was sitting in his office with a Gestapo man. I acted as if I had not seen anything and went around from the yard to Potschower Street, went back into Wigdor Shalonik's yard, where I waited a long time undetected [transl.???]. When the movement outside died down, I slipped back into the workshop--nobody was around. Listening through the wall, I heard my employer speaking in his office with several other men. In the darkness I noticed a pail of water and fell upon with parched lips.

Outside night had fallen, but the conversation on the other side of wall went on and on. It was already quite late when I heard them leave the office. Barefoot, I carefully approached the door, which the employer had locked. I called him by name very quietly. A moment later I heard the door unlock and the master came in. I told him the whole story. I could see that he was not overly happy about our having come, but for the moment he could refuse our request to let us stay in the hideout in the workshop. Soon he brought my friend in and gave us a few pieces of bread and bottle of coffee. He let us into the hiding place and went away. My friend, who had lain here for two months and knew every nook and cranny, help me get my bearings in the darkness. We stretched out the straw sacks that were in the hole. We ate the bread with great appetite after such a long fast. We fell quickly into a deep sleep filled with strange dreams.

When we awoke, there was already loud banging in the workshop. Shining through a small 4 -5 centimeter hole in the floor, the sun gave us a healthy helping of light.

I looked around to see what my grave looked like. It was 2.5 meters long, 2 meters wide and 1.5 meters high. The walls were covered with planks, a double ceiling, so that noone above in the workshop could hear what was going on below. The entrance was through the floor, which one accessed by removing two floorboards, which were always bolted down. There were two straw sacks in the hiding places, a small table, on which there was a small cupboard. There was also a small chest which enclosed a pail for excrement. This was the entire inventory. The Schneiderman brothers, Shlomo Steingart and my friend had build this hideout. In December 1942 they escaped from their work with the Gestapo in the ghetto after the Jews of the Wehrmacht camp had been shot, and hid out here for a short time.

The grave was located in a small room of the former Gerer Hasidim Shtibl.

What did we do there the whole day long? As long as the christians were working above, we had to act very quietly--we could not even cough. The best thing was to sleep all day in the grave until they finished working above. When the day was over for the people upstairs, it was just beginning for us in the grave. We would crawl out from the [pritsche, transl.???] and get some bread. This was our only meal.

If there was something besides bread there, it was a real holiday; we would wash it all down with a little water.

It was possible to see well enough with the light that entered through the tiny hole so as to be able to read. Unfortunately, there was nothing to read. Once in a while we got a small piece of a newspaper, which we studied from corner to corner. We had two Yiddish books by David Frishman and Avraham Reisen. These we read through three times each, although they were not all that interesting. The life they depicted was so idyllic, quite distant from and unlike from our present [transl???-royer] in tragic reality.

Frishman wrote of a Jew who wept for a daughter who went away to live with a christian. What a real tragedy! Fathers today would be overjoyed if a christian would take their daughters just to save their lives. As the Jews say these days: "If the Creator himself does not want the Jews to live, why should I upset him by living as a Jew despite everything?"

I was finally able to persuade our landlord to give me a couple of notebooks in which I have begun to write down the history of the destruction of Biala. This is how I passed away the time a few hours each summer night. Before we could turn around, the morning light started creeping through the little hole and we had to transform ourselves back into mummies in the tomb [presentsche, transl???].

[HERE INSERT THE TWO FULL PAGE PHOTOGRAPHS WITH THE FOLLOWING CAPTIONS:

"Biala. The Gerer Hasidim Shtibl, site of the workshop of the Ethnic German Kraskowski, where our hiding place was located. ~

Photographed after the Liberation."

"Biala. View of our hiding place in the Gerer Hasidim Shtibl.

Photographed after the War."]

Thoughts of my father and brother plagued me. It has been a week since the bloody chapter in Mezritch and still not a trace of them. Could something terrible, G-d forbid, have happened to my father when he jumped or while he was on his way to Biala? We have to be ready for anything, but I cannot rid myself of the thought that something is not right as far as my father is concerned. And what is going on with my brother? He had first class documents on him, why haven't we seen him? The thoughts torment me, and you lie here in this grave and cannot do anything to find out something.

From time to time, the Ethnic German tosses us a piece of news from the outside. We learned from him that the Germans experienced a bit of a "resettlement" when they were dispatched from Tunis.

One Sunday we were lying and dozing in the grave, someone burst into the workshop and started screaming my name, my brother's name and others in Yiddish. We recognized him by his voice as the former Jewish worker from the workshop, Shlomo Zucker, who is working now at the Gestapo, and in this capacity, is occupied at the workshop. We did not want to reveal that we were there and therefore did not reply. Zucker quieted down and let us be.

The next Sunday the same thing happened again. When we remained silent, he lost control of his Jewish soul and tore up the floor board.

I have to go to him and ask whether he has heard if anyone is here. He assured me that noone knew. He had called to us because he had understood that some of us had come here after the events in Mezritch.

I asked him to keep it all a secret, the Master must not even know that he, Zucker, knows about us. He asked what we needed and would try to provide us with it. He told us that the Biala Gestapo had brought 17 Jewish artisans from Mezritch to work for them, including Yehezkiel Stein. Also the Jews from the Yanewe Wigoda were taken to the airfield.

He did not know what was happening in Mezritch. He had simply heard that the remaining Jews had been driven into the synagogue--but he had no idea what had happened to them afterwards. He told us about life working for the Gestapo, where the regime was very harsh. They do not even dare to read newspapers, or buy anything for themselves and the food there is meagre.

We went on chatting this way until he suddenly told us that they were supposed to have brought Jews from Lukow, Kalushin and Belgium to Mezritch.

Our Ethnic German, who had driven through Mezritch, also told us that he had seen Jews going to work in Mezritch. All of a sudden he informed us that we could not keep on lying here where there was no fresh air....

We understood that he was sick of our lying here. Besides it was a big bother for him to furnish us with food and water. He did this without letting his own wife know. Moreover, he had to take the chamber pail from us, because he did not want us, for security reasons, going out into the yard.

We too were anxious to get back to Mezritch. We yearned for Jewish surroundings. And we wanted to see what had become of Mezritch. The road to Mezritch was, however, full of danger and this diminished our desire to go.

Furthermore, we knew that one could not stay long in Mezritch in any case, since Treblinka was still active and we would have to come back here.

So the days and nights went by. We sit in the grave and think: "How long will we be able to wait here?"

Sometimes you would sit so deep in thought that you forgot where in the world you were. You cannot fathom what it means to be lying here in a grave. Why do I have to hide from human eyes? It doesn't take long to understand the answer. Just then we hear German being spoken above in the workshop. My friend recognizes the voice of the Gestapo man Schmidt who is in charge of the Jewish workers at the Gestapo. Reality is again before our eyes. We want to yell out from the grave: "Hitler, we are living just to upset you!"

On a Sabbath afternoon at twilight your thoughts drift back to the past. Images and memories from years gone by come back to life--how I used to walk with my precious wife through the streets of the town, and how here in the Gerer Shtibl the Hasidim would sit and celebrate the traditional Third Meal. It seemed as if one could hear the zemiros being sung above. Back then those sounds seemed so foreign to me, now they are so close to my heart. One can hear well, it seems, the strains of the weekday prayer, "v-hu rachum y'chaper avon," announcing that the Sabbath Queen has already departed and the week with all its troubles has arrived....

C. BACK TO MEZRITCH

Our protector let us know frequently that we could not stay with him much longer. We would watch him closely when he would come to us late at night. His wife, who still did not know about our hiding place, was also suspicious about his being out of the house every evening. As a result, we decided to go to Mezritch.

Our decision was accelerated by the filthy condition in which we found ourselves. We had not bathed in five weeks. We could not get washed in the hiding place and we were only allowed up into the workshop once. We did manage to use that occasion to get washed. We had no change of clothes. We were covered with lice to such an extent that we felt like scratching our bodies to pieces.

On Monday night, May 31, we prepared ourselves for the march. We packed up the few things which we had gotten from Shlomo Zucker; I finished my notes on the destruction of Biala and packed my notebooks in wooden sheath and buried it in the hiding place.

We were anxious to get on our way all Tuesday long. We could hardly wait for the light from the small crack to begin to disappear. We waited for the night, which conceals all misdeeds and would make it possible for us to slip out of town without mishap.

At 11:00 p.m, the Ethnic German let us out of our hole. We thanked him for hospitality up to then and said goodbye. We was very moved and asked us to try and understand the situation he was in. We stressed that if we would have to leave Mezritch, we might have to come back to the hiding place. He stammered, "Well, what's done is done...."

Because we had been lying in the grave without moving for four weeks, we were shaky on our feet and had difficulty keeping our balance. We came out into the courtyard and took a breath of fresh air. A tranquil June night hung over us, the sky was filled with stars, no moon, which was very good for the dangerous journey we were about to commence.

Just as we had done we snuck into town, we snuck out this time barefoot, slipping along the sides of houses. We had hardly reached the end of Sitniker Street, where we had to put our shoes back on again and take our first solid step, when suddenly a soldier appeared from behind a fence aiming his rifle and commanded: "Halt! Stehenbleiben!" ["Stop! Stay where you are!"].

Since we had no intention of staying put, we started running back. I had gone about 100 meters when I noticed that noone was either chasing or shooting after me. I stopped for a while to see what had happened to my friend and whether, G-d forbid, he may have fallen into German hands.

In the darkness, I saw somebody moving along up against the wall. I realized that it was my friend. He came up to me and said that he had fallen down while running and had lost his shoes, hat and the bread.

It was too risky to go back and look for the things he had lost. We decided to best to get away from here as fast as we could and tried to get out of town by way of Terebel Street. But we had to turn back from there as well after we heard soldiers' footsteps and German chit-chat.

We started going back into town. We could not understand what was going on. Could it be that the town was surrounded? Why hadn't the soldiers fired after us?

There was no time to ponder the point. We decided to get back as quickly as we could to the workshop and from there into the safe grave. But the workshop was locked by now. We had to crawl into the secondary hideout under the shop where we had lain when we first came to Biala.

We lied there and figured out how to get hold of the master without being seen so that we could get back into the workshop hideout. We were so exhausted by the events of the evening that we gave up the idea of heading for Mezritch. But after we had lain there for a few hours and day started to break, our resolve returned. We decided that we would try again that night to get out of town, using a different route.

We could hardly wait for the night, our defender, to arrive. Our hearts beat faster, our ears were sensitized to the slightest crack, and our eyes were straining ahead like two searchlights. We moved slowly step by step until we had finally reached the rye field on Terebel Street where we felt safer and could walk freely.

What a leap the rye had made towards the sky during the month we had been lying under the earth!

We cut through fields, soaked with night dew and reached the highway which leads to Mezritch.

On the highway we passed by peasant cottages where everyone was fast asleep. We were truly jealous of them, for us sleep was a pleasure far beyond our reach. A dog heard our footsteps and started barking. Even after we were far away from the cottages, you could still hear the dog howling.

It was too bad the dark night departed so soon. We felt like shouting: "Night, stay with us a while longer! What is the hurry?" We had to hide ourselves in the meantime during daylight. We went into the rye field, drenched with dew, and lied down to catch a few winks. Sleep did not come, however. We were chilled to the bone, soaked with dew, and started to shiver--our teeth chattering.

The eastern sky was filled with blood red light, but you could not yet see the sun. How good a couple warm rays of sunlight would feel now. It was not long before the hot sun was burning down on us, scalding our bodies. Sweat poured from us; we started peeling off our clothes, which did not help much as the sun baked us without respite. We lay there parched with bone-dry lips without a drop of water. It was still very early in the morning, and we still had a whole day ahead of us before the darkness of night would once again conceal us from the murderers' eyes.

When sun set in the west we woke up and started moving along the edge of the rye field until it got dark. That night we came upon a stream in the village of Rogoznetszke and drank up so much water that the water sloshed around in our bellies the whole way. We washed our hot, sweaty heads which refreshed and renewed our spirits.

Avoiding the village of Rogoznetszke, which lay on our route, we had a direct route to Mezritch. We wanted to get there just as dawn was breaking so that we could determine whether the town was still surrounded by gendarmes.

After an hour of strenuous walking, we saw the high city walls for the first time in the early morning blue. We had to sneak into the ghetto the back way. This was no easy task. The backroads which lead into the ghetto were often full of Nazis.

We crawled through the fence of the cemetery. We saw fresh, large mass graves, which were surely a result of the last bloody action. We were soon on the other side of the cemetery and carefully made our way through uninhabited streets to the ghetto.

Here were the barbed-wire fences of the ghetto. Our eyes beheld a frightening vision of destruction. Doors, windows and shutters were ripped off of homes where not a living soul was to be found.

[HERE INSERT PHOTOGRAPHS WITH THE FOLLOWING CAPTIONS:

"Mezritch. Destroyed Jewish houses in the Jewish Quarter."

"(Archives of the Central Jewish Historical Commission of Poland)"

"Mezritch. The well on Garbarska Street, which supplied water to the ghetto."

"(Archives of the Central Jewish Historical Commission of Poland)."]

The area around the well on Shmuelwizna Street which used to be continuously wet was now so dry that it gave us the impression that no one could have possibly used it in weeks. Where were the people? Or was there simply no one here at all?

We withdrew to the house of the living. I knocked on the window of a Christian's house and asked him whether there were still any Jews in town and where they could be found. The answer I was given was that there were indeed Jews still in town in the former ghetto on Brisker Street. The spectre of Jews being here was truly unbelievable. But what choice did we have, we had to risk entering the ghetto.

We came to the house on Popshetshne Street where a family I knew once lived. The shutters and the front door were closed. A sign that someone was living inside. I knocked and called out the name of my friend. A woman's voice answered from inside that no such person was living there. I asked if she would open the door and invite us in for the meantime. In a few minutes we were inside the home among Jews. The Knopmacher family was living there along with Eliyahu Kozes' mother-in-law. We were now sure that the news about Jews having been brought to

Mezritch was not correct; and the handful of Jews still in town figured that they would be liquidated any minute.

"You are right on the mark," [??? transl.] we declared, and sat down on the floor. We soon dozed off.

No sooner had we done so that we heard some movement outside, and set out into the now ruined ghetto to search for somebody we knew. There was hardly anyone left in the ghetto. We met the Bialer, Avraham Nuchowitsch and his sister Rivka what had gone into hiding in Mezritch in a hideout during the last action; Mrs. Yehudit Pluwer and her son; Mrs. Mindel (Yontel Shuster's daughter); our former comrades from the Biala workcamp Zelig Gasser and Joseph Lazarowsky.

In the whole ghetto, which officially no longer existed, there were about 200 people and the majority of them were illegal. But as long as a few Jews had the right to be there, the remainder were able to make do.

The principal point I was interested in was whether my father ever arrived in Mezritch or whether anyone had any news about him. Unfortunately, noone knew anything about him. It was difficult to conclude that something terrible had happened to my father when he jumped from the speeding train. Yet another bloody wound had been cut into my sorrow-filled heart. With how much pain and suffering have I been burdened? Why is it that I am the only one left to decry the injustice done to my beloved ones?

"Forgive me, dear Father, for having left you alone. You know that I would have never abandoned you in your most trying time. You and I have suffered and struggled together. It seems that it was a just reward for my latest and last irresponsible behavior for me to be the one left alive. Who better than you would know what a punishment it is to be alive these days. I have noone to whom I can open my wounded heart, noone from whom to hear a word of consolation. In no way can I make peace with the thought that, you, too, my devoted and proud Father, will I never see again."

As for my brother, I found out that Ukrainians had been in the car occupied by the Jewish artisan group and that it was probably not possible for him to jump from the train. The workers had been taken away to Lublin where they living under harsh conditions.

I was also told that there were Jewish women in the Lublin camps, who were engaged in hard labor that was also dangerous to their health. They were punished by female German overseers.

I ran into Shimon Kleinbojm from Radzin who wanted to know when it was that I had fallen back into the cage. He told me that as he and his wife were being marched to the trains on May 26, they were saved by nothing short of a miracle and

escaped the action. He related that his brother-in-law, David Lichtenstein, who was working with a group of Jews at the Radzin Gestapo, had written him that it was good that he had been saved from resettlement and that he should keep trying to do this. "Not bad advice," Shimon Kleinbojm smiled ironically, "where the earth is on fire all around you and you have nowhere else to go." He confided in me that he intended to go back to Radzin and take refuge with a christian there.

D. MAY 1943 IN MEZRITCH

Those of us who were lead out of the market place on May 2 and shipped off to Treblinka did not know what took place here in Mezritsch during the beautiful spring month of May. How could it be that Mezritsch, which had been Judenrein, now was home to a handful of Jews? How could one explain the fact that the bigshots, including the chairman of the Jewish Council had been either shot to death or hauled off to Treblinka while these few Jewish handworkers were able to remain?

After we had washed and tasted a little home cooking, I started asking what had happened during the previous month. This is what I was told:

After the transports had left the trainstation on Sunday, the Nazis lead by "Schleger" returned to the ghetto. They knew that there were still Jews hiding out in the ghetto. The bloody orgies started all over again. They broke open floors with axes, threw grenades into the hideouts and murdered people without ever seeing them. The streets were so full of blood, that they wrote the word "Jude" [Jew] all over the sidewalks and walls in Jewish blood.

They pointed out a young woman from Radzin (named Gnedel) whose face was filled with infinite torment. They told me that that Sunday during the day that had pulled the woman and her child together with other people out from a hideout. They were taken out onto the street and ordered to lie down with their faces to the ground. They were then slaughtered in this position by a series of rifle bursts. The murderers placed the woman's child on her back. The child's head was resting on its mother's. A well-aimed German bullet had smashed the child's head to bits causing the warm, child's blood to pour over the mother's head. The murderers believed that they had taken care of both mother and child with a single bullet. They then paid their respects to the mother, as well as the other victims, by kicking the bodies. She did not move as she was unconscious. The murderers reckoned her among the dead. That night the gravediggers came to take the corpses away to the cemetery and noticed that the woman was still alive. They passed over this group of victims and started working on another. When night had fallen on the bloodied town, the woman was able to crawl on all fours from the mass of dead bodies, cast a farewell glance at her dead child and went back into hiding among the living.

In one hiding place where the murderer Bauer had tossed a grenade, the following people were killed among others: Monya Lustigman and his wife (from

the Jurberg family), his wife's sister and brother, and Monya's two sisters all from Biala.

This is how the first day of the Fifth Action ended: approximately 2000 people had been pulled out of the ghetto for Treblinka and work camps, while several hundred more were lying in pools of blood with shattered skulls.

When Monday, the second day of the action, turned up yet more Jews, a second transport was organized for Treblinka. They managed to round up roughly another thousand souls, the greater part of whom turned out voluntarily.

On the second day of the action, they took money and jewelry from the masses. When the gendarme, Lieutenant Seifert, was made aware of the fact that Heitshe Wiernicka, daughter of Bund activist, Berl Wiernicky, was refusing to give up the little medallion around her neck, the proud girl ripped off the medallion, (a set of miniature metal ten commandments), and threw it along with the torn silver chain in the hangman's face. The terrified Jews were beside themselves as a result of this act, and wondered how the gendarme would react to it.

After the transport had been dispatched, the murders began again. Once again Jewish blood flowed over the streets, in the houses and at the cemetery.

[HERE INSERT PHOTOGRAPH OF HEITSHE WIERNICKA].

The gravediggers did not even have time to wipe off their sweat. New mass graves appeared everywhere.

There were not only corpses at the cemetery but severely wounded, who had been brought as if they were already dead and with whom no one knew what to do. There was a badly wounded Jewish woman there, convulsing in pain, who screamed to the gravediggers, "Murderers, why didn't you see fit to finish the job?!"

This is how the scythe of death cut down lives until Tuesday afternoon, when the lieutenant of the gendarmarie, Seifert, under whose jurisdiction the former ghetto fell, began to pardon Jews found in hideouts and said to them, "I am extending your lives for the moment, but I cannot spare them."

A group of Jewish metalworkers, who worked outside the ghetto, found itself inside the ghetto when the action began and had no way to get out. No sooner had the first victims begun falling in the streets, than took down a couple of doors from some houses, put some corpses on them and carried them off to the cemetery, whence they disappeared into hideouts outside the ghetto.

Many people who were discovered in hideouts were shot on the spot. Among them were Dr. Lichtenberg and his wife, child and brother. There were dragged out of their hide out on Sunday and shot by Bauer. Some people were taken out into the

street from of a hiding place in the Lempert's home, stood up against a wall and shot to death. Among the victims were the Bialans: my cousin, Moshe Faigenbojm (Zile Stoler's son) and his wife, Blima (from the Gershkop family), their baby son and his wife's sister. In another location Yitzhak Fogel and Meir Orlansky were shot along with their wives.

I was told how Yaakov Manperl and Monya Sucharchik threw themselves upon the Schutzpolice officer who had entered the Kurt de Lauer brush factory on Sunday, May 2, 1943. They are supposed to have taken a rifle and wounded another Schutzpolice officer. Yaakov Manperl was shot to death on the spot, while Monya Sucharchik succeeded in escaping and is now supposed to be in Warsaw.

Many Jews also fell trying to climb over the barbed wire ghetto perimeter. Among them was the Bialan, Shepsel Dorfman.

Some of the Jews found in hideouts were taken away to Polish police stations. From there about 200 men were taken under a heavy guard of gendarmes and Schutzpolice to the cemetery. They were order to sit down in front of the entrance to the cemetery. Groups of 20 men were then lead into the cemetery. The command "Fire!" was heard. Two hundred lives were thus cut down. In order to make sure that none of them would arise from the grave, the German knights of the 20th century ran their bayonets through each head. Only one young man survived that night's execution. The bullets had missed him and he was only stabbed in the head by a bayonet. When the bloody orgy at the cemetery was finished, the young man managed to get up off the ground and after waiting a little while dragged himself into a hiding place. The young man walked around for a long time with his head bandaged.

With the help of some of the remaining Jewish police officers and the generous Jews themselves, the Germans began moving Jewish property into a warehouse located in the former Beis Hamidrash on Brisker Street. The warehouse laborers were housed at the same place. The remaining Jews stayed in the synagogue, until they could fence in a new cage to serve as a ghetto. Several days later, they were taken from the synagogue and settled on two streets.

As soon as the Jews sensed that the storm had passed, that the blood bath had quieted down, they began coming back out of their underground dens. They started arriving from the forests to take a stab at living again. They were famished, but had no lack of money. The Jewish houses had been abandoned. Before Jewish property fell into the hands of the murderers, it was better that Jews should be able to enjoy a decent meal.

When the people of the Ghetto came out of their houses on the morning of Wednesday, May 26 (21 Iyyar 5703), they saw that the barbed wire of the ghetto was surrounded by Schutzpolice. They understood that the Nazis had now come back for their souls.

Most of them, already tired of living and resigned to their fate, came out voluntarily to the assembly point. Among them was the former member of the Jewish Council, Moshe Zuberger together with his wife and two children. But there was no lack of people who went back into their hideouts. The action ended after only a few hours, this time without shooting: the result--some 600 people were "peacefully" packed off to the other world. There were but two voluntary victims during the action. Two elderly Jews asked to be shot rather than be taken to Treblinka. They wanted to lie in the Mezritch cemetery. Their wish was granted. They did not search for hiding places, but rather left the unaccounted for for the laborers at the gendarmarie and warehouse [transl.???].

The people were taken from the ghetto to a barrack on the Radzin highway (the so-called "Piaskes"). There they had their food and money taken from them and had to take off their clothes, so that they actually went to the trains in their underwear. They were forced to undress so that they could not jump from the freight cars. The procession of naked and barefoot Jews to the trains was lead by the Nazi Bauer. Among those marched off was a member of the well-known, wealthy Rubenstein family. The brute Bauer constantly went over to him to taunt and ridicule him: "You will never see Palestine; but Tel Aviv is such a pretty city. I have seen Palestine...but you, forget about it!"

Removing the Jews' clothes was a precaution against their jumping from the transport, but even that was not enough for Bauer. He brought boards from the sawmill to board up the freight cars in which the Jews made their trip to Treblinka. Besides this, they dispatched an escort of gendarmes with rifles to accompany the train. All of these measures scarcely helped and Jews continued to jump and make their way to Mezritch where they were quickly stripped naked again.

[HERE INSERT SEVERAL PHOTOGRAPHS WITH THE FOLLOWING CAPTIONS:

"Remnant of the Mezritch Ghetto. View of Brisker Street."

"Mezritch. The action begins. 5.26.43. The Jews sit assembled in the market."

"The Jews are prepared to get under way (at left a machine gun). 'X' is the gendarme, Franz Bauer."

"The march begins. Captain Gnade of the Schutzpolice (with the revolver) observes the procession."

"The Jews are herded down Lubelska Street (before the bridge)."

"During Hrabia Potocki's Administration. Second from right, the Polish policeman, Pszodownik Babicz."

"At the barrack on the Radzin Highway ("Piaske's"): A woman is searched."

"At the barrack: People undress and are searched."

"A hunchbacked, Jewish woman in shirt. Left, Captain Gnade; Right Lieutenant Seifert."

"In the barrack: a Jewish woman in her underclothing with unbuttoned blouse. Second from right, Lieutenant Seifert. Right, bread and clothing taken from the Jews."

"The searched Jews sit on the other side of the barrack, now without their outer garments."

"A group of participants in the action, lead by Captain Gnade (first from right, first row). In the truck a group of Jews freed during the action, when they promised to show the Nazis where Jewish property had been hidden. They were taken away to the Polish police station."

"Participants in the action with their trophied, sliced open Jewish bread in which banknotes had been found. 'X' is the gendarme, Franz Bauer."

"(The foregoing pictures from the resettlement in Mezritch on May 26, 1943, were purchased by the author after the liberation from a Mezritch christian who explained: the Nazis had given the film for developing to a Polish photographer, who secretly made a complete set of these for himself."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LAST DAYS

After the last action, about 200 people wandered about the streets of the former ghetto. Almost all the young people had fled to the fields and forests. Only the quartered warehouse workers and authorized hand workers were allowed to be in the liquidated ghetto. But no one really bothered you if you did not belong to one of the above-mentioned groups. The left-over remnant used to joke, that the Nazis would not succeed in making another transport to Treblinka and we could already hear the sound of the Messiah's shofar in the Mezritch cemetery.

The number of Jews in the ghetto grew by the day, since after wandering around for weeks, after lying in all the hiding places, one had to come back to Mezritch.

Most had been hiding in the woods, where they had even built special hideouts. If you had a small group of 5 - 6 people without weapons, you could not get any food from the peasants even for money. You had to go into town to buy food and that meant death. It was during such an excursion into town that Chaim Greenbaum and Hershel Baumgarten were shot to death by the Germans just outside of town. Moreover, you had to take care that you were not noticed by strangers, because you would be robbed and you would have to come back to town this time for clothes. And how long could one stroll to and from town this way? The worst were the frequent patrols the Germans made into the woods which now resulted in numerous victims. In the woods there were also bands of armed christians, who could not tolerate the mere presence of Jews in the forest and murdered them in cold blood. This is how a christian named Stephan, once a driver for a Jewish firm in Mezritch, shot Hershele Kogod of Mezritch, in the Zeroczyna Forest, where he had been hiding out with a girl from Warsaw named Nelli. This same Stephan is known to have taken a considerable number of other Jewish lives. Joseph Elbaum (Yaakov Shoyhet's nephew) was shot there in the forest. His little girl managed to get back to Mezritch with a shot up hand. They found Shmuelke Legatch (a nickname) near Potocki's sawmill, stabbed to death.

There were also larger, armed Jewish groups in the forest. For them getting food was no problem. They would go at night into a village and when a peasant saw a revolver he became very generous; there was no shortage of food. They had to beware of the frequent German patrols. And there was another problem--bands of Russian prisoners of war who had escaped from German prison camps and were wandering the forests. They called themselves partisans, even though they did not carry on any actual partisan activity. They cared only about finding food, drinking and sleeping in peace. They did not let Jews join them, although they did look for Jewish girls. It was because of such bands that there could be no armed Jewish groups in the forests. Jewish groups were engaged by the Russian bands in vicious

fight in which the Jews were disarmed and robbed of everything. When one would ask the more enlightened of these Russian bands why they behaved this way toward the victims of Hitler's campaign of murder, they would answer: "All Jews are fascists. They spend their whole life collecting money."

After such an encounter in the forest with a band of escaped Russian prisoners, the Jews returned to town embittered. In despair those who had come back to town from the forests would exclaim: "I would rather be killed by a German bullet, than have anything to do with those Russians."

The forest haven for Jews did not last more than a few weeks. Eventually almost all were seen back in the ghetto. One such group that returned had been disarmed and robbed by the Russians. Among them were the Knopenmacher brothers and their sister from Mezritch, Feivel Buchhalter, Moshe Steinberg and his sister, Shepsel Leibzon, Nachke Gershkop, David Rosenberg, all from Biala. A second group fled from the forest during a German patrol. Among the members of the group were the former Polish prisoner of war, Abraham Stein, Persky, and the Biala girls, Sarah Wiesenfeld and Bass.

A small number remained in the corn fields. Among them was a fellow from Mezritch by the name of Blachazh. Living conditions there were monstrously difficult. The sun burned their bodies, while the rain and night dew mildewed one's clothes. Getting food and drink meant putting one's life at risk. But what would happen when the crops were harvested in another six weeks--where could one go then?

A larger percentage of Jews attempted to hide out with peasants, where they could get food and have a clean shirt to put on. They would pay the peasants rather large monthly sums, which before the war could have purchased a home in town.

The average christian, who had no ulterior motives, and who was terrified of the death penalty, which he could get for hiding Jews, would say to you: "Look, your own G-d doesn't want you stay alive. Do you want me, a Catholic, to risk my life to save yours?" Now go and try to engage the peasant in a religious dispute!

Another, more hospitable, christian might ask you to have pity on him and not embarrass him. He would say to you, "Listen, if you only got a fine or imprisonment for hiding a Jew, I would risk it. But you're talking about the death penalty. You've got to understand, you have already lost everything, you're alone and still you want to live. What can I say? I haven't lost anything. My family is intact. Look, here are my wife and kids--give me one reason why I should risk all this?"

How could I answer the christian, who was being perfectly frank? What could we demand of him? Wasn't he right after all? I turned away my eyes in shame and tried to go with life--a life which could offer me nothing. What right did I have

to put someone else's life in danger, just so that I, drowning, could grab hold of a life line?

But there were those peasants who were quick to take up your offer. These had other intentions. Some wanted to let you stay for a little while, take your money and then tell you to get out. In such cases, you were lucky to get away with your life. There were peasants who would rescue you from the Germans just to get you to their farm which they used for their own murderous designs.

Everyday one heard stories about the murder of Jews who had turned over their fortunes to peasant hands along with their lives. So it was reported that the Mezritch residents, Zalman Wasserman and his son, Shlomo Jawerbaum and his wife, and Yitzhak Dzhik were supposed to have been killed in their peasant hideout.

There was considerable commotion in the warehouses that had been filled with Jewish property. The items from the last bloody action had not been shipped to Germany, but rather were sold at dirt-cheap prices to the christian population which had looked greedily on from all sides.

The warehouse was the meeting point for Jews and christians. You would see scenes where a Jew would hold a christian by the sleeve trying to make him understand the business of buying a hiding place. Just like one used to buy vacation homes in the old days, so now it was busy season for getting hold of a hiding place with a christian. Many disputes arose over hiding places. There was a religious arbitration over the matter of a hiding place, between several Yeshiva students, who were still in Mezritch.

Some foreigners brought the Mezritch resident, Matis Bik (a nickname) to court. He wanted to go off into a hiding place, forsaking his two children. The oldest child, a girl of 12, wept and shouted: "I will not let you go off and hide. We will not stay here alone." The father complained that he did not have any more money and only one life could be saved. He agreed to let the daughter save herself, while he remained here with his young son. "At least one of the men from our family should survive," he called out after her his voice full of tears. The daughter would hear nothing of it, however. She would not be separated from her little brother and said, "If all three cannot be saved, then let them kill us together."

Trade also developed in hiding places. One person would pay another to vacate a hiding place. There were also professional hiding-place brokers. Such a broker arranged a hiding place for Yaakov Likerman, a Jewish policeman from Mezritch and the secretary of the Radzyn Jewish Council, Blacherman. We heard that a Mezritch woman and her little daughter who had been set up in a hiding place, were no longer alive.

Some of those who had already gone into hiding were lingering from time to time inside the barbed wire fences, not in a hurry to get back to their hiding places.

Why waste a day, when one could drop by here, get something good to eat and drink and even stroll around outside the ghetto.

Every day new faces arrived. The comedians would say: "Now that the in-laws have all gotten together, the wedding's likely to begin soon." By this they meant that a new action was in the offing.

Why should one lie in the forests, fields or hiding places, when life here in the ghetto went on so noisily until late at night?

No one lacked money and why should one save it anyway? The time now is yours, and as for what will happen later, no one knows. So live while you can. Even the few surviving children had large sums of money, and behaved as if they were adults.

You could get anything your heart desired in the ghetto--including most importantly, brandy. Everyone drunk brandy. After a meal, you just threw your dishes and utensils out the window. It did not pay to wash the dishes; when you could just go into an abandoned home and find another set.

The homes were filled with dirt. But it didn't pay to clean them out. In another day, you would be swept out of the houses yourself.

Loud sounds of singing could be heard from the ghetto zone late at night. The christians could not understand what was happening there with the few Jews who were left. In those days, the song "Treblinka" by an unknown composer, arrived in Mezritch. Everyone sang it. The song went like this:

In a Polish town, early in the morning,
A shout is heard, a woeful sound.
People, half crazy, naked and bare,
Suddenly one hears, "Jews, quickly, outside."

Gendarmes, Ukrainians, police aplenty,
To murder the Jews is their goal,
They murder and beat, fear and fright,
The Jews are lead away to the trains.

My pen cannot describe this,
How the wheels are turning,
The freight cars are full,
The Jews are going, for the sanctification of G-d's
Name, to Treblinka.

Our brothers across the ocean,
They cannot sense our bitter woe,
They cannot know our bitter need,

As death awaits us every minute.

The war will turn the corner one day,
The world will experience a terrible shock,
The Jewish heart is filled with woe,
Who can feel our pain?

Rivers of tears will flow,
When they will one day find,
The biggest grave in the world,
There Jews rest--by the millions--in Treblinka.

There were those would sit and take stock of themselves. They would ask themselves: "Was it worth separating from my wife, children and family? To suffer under the Nazis for nearly a year just to come to such a stage? Wouldn't have been better to have gone with my loved ones? To be with them to the end and to have died with them?" But it was now too late. Even in the grave, you would have been thrown far away from your loved ones.

All ghetto life now was concentrated in one room on Brisk Street, where a tailor's workshop was located. That is where the Mezritch tailors worked: Joseph Hofliat, Shmuel Zawel Fitterman, Shlome Boygman, Tolwinsky, Berl Feldreis, Gishe Leah Appelbaum and someone named Gedaliah. It was here that every evening the shoemaker, Shlomo Bialer, who worked at the gendarmerie and who got all the information, brought the latest news.

The tailor Hofliat would sit trying to find some way to keep his soul going. He wanted to stay alive to see his children again. For this he was prepared to take any risk to save his life. Tolwinski went regularly out of the ghetto to a christian friend of his to try and find a hiding place for him and his son. Berl Feldreis together with his wife and two sons had even been lying around for several weeks in the forest and had to return to the ghetto. Feldreis himself had already given up, but his vivacious wife ran around looking for a hideout. Shmuel Zawel Fitterman, his wife, Zlate and their only remaining child, were sitting depressed not wanting to make the slightest effort to save themselves. Fitterman asks the gravediggers, Velvel Zuckerman, Fishel Weinberg and Edelbaum to bury him in his talit, near his son, Joshua, who had been shot to death by the gendarme, Bauer.

Opposite them stood Fitterman's nephew, the tailor Shmuelke, with a bottle of brandy in his hand, by now a little drunk, and shouted: "All of your planning won't help a bit. You will all go with me to sleep, I do not want to live! I don't want to be a better visitor away from my wife! I want to be with her! Cheers, Jews!"⁰

⁰ Translation ???

Every day we heard rumors that the end was coming either today or tomorrow. We seized upon every word of a careless gendarme or Regular policeman. We measured the length of a Jewish life by how long it would take to finish Lieutenant Seifert's leather coat or Police captain, Gnade's pair of boots. As long as one had work to do, nothing would happen. But one had to be ready at any time... .

The few Jews who were in the ghetto, were not left alone but were dragged off each day to work. In this, the gendarmes, Bloch and Strubel, particularly distinguished themselves. The Jewish policemen, Yaakov Greenstein and Benjamin Rogozhik never took off their police caps and assisted in seizing Jews for work.

Leibel Krawietsky was the overseer for the Jewish workers in the warehouse. He was well up in his years and his behavior was resented by everyone. He was regularly drunk and babbled things in front of the Germans that he ought not have said. Once he was sitting in a buggy with a drunken Regular policeman and a christian who was playing a harmonica. The buggy drove all over town, the harmonica was playing and christians stood there fascinated by the spectacle.

Leibel Krawietsky' son, Moshe, the former commander of the Jewish police, was hiding outside the ghetto with his bride, with a christian somewhere. It seemed, however, that the christian was not so keen on hiding them, since they frequently slept in the ghetto. He always appeared in public wearing a revolver and boasted about having organized a partisan group.

The second commander of the Jewish police, Abraham Zuckerman, was also still in Mezritch. He was hiding out on the Aryan side, but spent most of the time in the ghetto. Once when Abraham Zuckerman walked past the warehouse, the gendarme, Bloch, ordered him to stop. Zuckerman did not obey and began to flee. Another gendarme, known as " Zigeunerel," the little gypsy, shot at him a few times, seriously wounding him. They took him away to the cemetery, still breathing, where a gendarme was summoned to put him out of his misery with a bullet.

At the same time Abraham Rogozhik (Royzke Brode's husband), the former Jewish policeman was also shot to death outside the ghetto. He too had begun fleeing when ordered to halt by gendarme. The gendarme had shot after him and killed him in flight.

This is how the month of June passed. July arrived bringing a glimmer of hope. The British and Americans had finally started landing in Sicily--this was just a down payment on future military operations. The Soviet Army was inflicting serious, bloody blows on the Eastern Front. Everything seemed to say: "Hold on, man, help is on the way."

Pollacks, who had secret information, reported that the political situation was so bright that the war would be over in a number of weeks.

This was all fine, but where could one dig in for a few weeks? Where could one disappear from the murderers for such a short time? There had already been so much pain; we had gone through so much suffering, and now, when the end was in sight, there was no advice to be given.

My friend Shimshon Justman, and I made attempts to get into a hiding place somewhere, since we could not and would not count on the hiding place with the Ethnic German in Biala.

After many attempts we finally succeeded in teaming up with a group from Mezritch, headed by Shlomo Boygman and Gihe Leah Appelbaum, and we were supposed to get away to stay with Leshnik Haitshuk in a forest in the vicinity of Mezritch.

My friend and I were in a hurry to get away to a hideout, because we saw that the ground was burning under our feet. The Mezritchers, however, were quite certain that one could stay in town and live like human beings without having to run off and hide oneself in some hole in the ground. They assured us that we could disappear until the appropriate time.

Having experience from our earlier time lying in the Biala hiding place, we prepared ourselves in advance by bringing means to combat the lice, as well as equipping ourselves with an appropriate amount of reading matter.

Meanwhile people started whispering to one another that on Monday, July 19, the last action would occur, after which Mezritch would be completely Judenrein. We already stocked our hideout with our packs and decided to go in on Shabbat night.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FINAL ACT

As fate would have it, an event outside the ghetto is what may have hastened the last act in the tragedy of Mezritch.

On Shabbat, July 17, 1943 (14 Tammuz 5703), at about 5:00 in the afternoon, Jews who had been outside the ghetto suddenly started running in. They had noticed that peasants outside the ghetto were quickly driving out of the market in their carts. A rumor spread that Pollacks had shot at Germans, killing and

wounding some. What connection did this have with the Jews in the ghetto? It only took the slightest pretext for the knife to cause Jewish blood to spray, in the words of the Horst-Wessel Song.⁰

Many began to flee out of the ghetto and the remainder were ready to climb into their hideouts. I did not want to run out of the ghetto in midday without a particular destination. So I got ready to go into hiding in a bunker, located in our home.

We heard armed soldiers were now in the ghetto. Before we could make out what was happening, we heard rifle shots. We crawled into the hiding place which was located in a basement under the Rosenberg's house (nickname--Pulkownik) on Garbarska Street. The basement was cramped and stifling. We were hardly able to close the cover of the hiding place before we heard the soldiers steps in the house. My heart started beating rapidly--if either one of us made the slightest movement, we would be lost. We actually held our breath. It was deathly quiet until we could hear that the heavy boots were far from us and we could breathe freely again.

We lay this way in the hiding place until Sunday morning. It seemed as if it had become more calm. We had not taken part in the shooting outside the ghetto, yet we had given our own share of blood victims. Dozens of corpses lay in the ghetto streets, among whom we can mention the following names: Mottel Weinappel, Leibel Goldman, his wife Esther (nee Katz), Goldberg, who had been wounded before dragging himself into a hideout where his son, Leibel, was staying, and breathed his last breath at the entrance to the hiding place.

The Jews, who had been arrested yesterday, were to be freed. Among them were Shmuel Zawel Fitterman, his brother-in-law, Shmuelke and the teenager from Biala, Monya Zuberma. But the soldiers came back into the ghetto and the streets were empty and deserted.

We lay in the hiding place throughout Sunday, and almost died of fright several times. The Regular Police came into the house. We could hear their rapid, panting. They started tearing up the floor. We looked at each other resigned and terrified--in another minute we were lost. It got quiet upstairs and in our hideout we could hear the echo of the heavy boots.

At night when we crawled out of the basement, we learned that the Regular Police had entered the Ghetto searching for Jewish hiding places. Whomever they encountered was arrested. Most important among these, were the sick whom the Germans had not touched yesterday--today the few sick ones were shot to death in

⁰ Horst Wessel was a student who became involved in the political gang-warfare of the late 1920s and finally supported himself as a pimp in Berlin before he was killed in a street brawl. As the "poet" of the Horst Wessel Song, an unspeakably bad poem, he was glorified as a national hero by the Nazis. The Horst Wessel Song became the second national anthem after 1933 and had to be

Zweihundert Jahre Deutscher Kultur, p. 426, n.1 (New York 1966).

their beds. This was the best indication that an action was afoot. Among those arrested were those Mezritchers who were supposed to go with us into hiding, including the tailor, Shlomo Boygman, who knew Leshnik and was the only one who had dealt with him. They did not pick the right time to disappear from the ghetto. We had to give up the idea of going to the hideout with the Mezritchers. We joined a group of Bialans and decided that we would leave town that night, because tomorrow might be too late. We wanted to head in the direction of Biala.

There were nine people in our group. No one knew exactly where we were going. In our group there were: Shimshon Justman, Joshua Haffer, Shmuel Gwiazda and his wife, Yitzhak Kanier from Serock, Sara Cohen (nee Preter) and her brother Pinhas.

We got ready about 1:00 am on a beautiful summer night, with a star-filled sky and a full moon--and started to leave the ghetto. We crept out through gardens and back streets until we reached the highway to Biala and made it into the first corn field right outside of town.

During the course of the day on Monday the thought came to us of arranging a hideout a few kilometers outside of Biala, in a [Prochovnia],⁰ which is no longer active and is only used as a pasture for grazing.

When we lay there among the corn, we heard rifle fire from the direction of the Jewish cemetery. Who knows, we wondered, whether they had finished off the Jews arrested earlier.

Just as night fell, we set out again for Biala. Somewhere a faint hope still glimmered that Mezritch would not go on without Jews. We got further and further away from the town.

Mezritch, I will never forget you. They robbed me of my loved ones amidst your walls and annihilated them from this world.

⁰ Translation ???

--BIALA, SEPTEMBER 1943. WRITTEN IN A HIDEOUT IN A GARDEN OUTSIDE OF TOWN.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TREBLINKA

From Afar

Wherever one goes or stays he hears talk about Treblinka. The word is on everyone's lips. Even children who are just beginning to talk pronounce the word "Treb--lin--te" at the same time they are learning to say "Ma--Ma."

Where is this Treblinka? What was there before the war? Why did it merit such fame?

About half way on the Warsaw -- Bialystok rail line lies the Maklinia rail junction, which marked the border between Russia and Germany after the cessation of military operations in 1939. Some four kilometers south of the Maklinia station

there is a small village with a train station known as Treblinka. Before the war it was an unknown spot on the map and it remained this way until 1942.

The name of this little village was mentioned for the first time in Podlasie early in June 1942 in an underground Polish newsletter, which reported following news item: "Treblinka, a place in the General Government where the mass murder of Jews is taking place."

Which Jews were being exterminated there and where this was being done was not indicated. It was only in August of the same year that people in our area began mentioning the name Treblinka more frequently. Following the first resettlement action in Mezritch, we learned what was happening in Treblinka. Several Mezritchers had succeeded in escaping from the camp. It was from them that we got descriptive details about what our dear ones were going through.

The descriptions of the escapees were rather different. I will relate here the version that seems to be the most accurate: that of the Czeky brothers who managed to escape from Treblinka only to perish later in their home town of Mezritch.

The camp known as Treblinka, located in a small wooded area, is approximately three kilometers from the train stop with the same name. The camp is surrounded with electrified barbed wire and the whole area is heavily guarded with S.S. and Ukrainian troops.

What happened to the people when they arrived at the camp? First, some healthy men and tradespeople were selected from the human transports. They were taken to a work camp which was located separate and apart from the death camp. Those selected would work for a certain time in the labor camp. They were regularly replaced by fresh workers taken from newly arrived transports. The veteran workers would find their way to the death factory where they were killed.

There was also a group of laborers in the death camp itself. These were used to carry the dead. The same thing happened to this group as with the workers from the work camp. They yielded their places to new arrivals and themselves went to the gas chambers. Among the workers was a smaller group charged with loading the victims' clothing into trains. A few of them used the opportunity to hide away in the trains under the bundles of clothes so that they could then jump from the trains which carried the clothing from Treblinka.

The director of the camp, an S.S. man, gives the new arrivals a brief speech. He says that peace will soon be here. Meanwhile, everyone must do a little work. However, before they can be sent to work, they must be well bathed and deposit all their possessions with the camp bursar.

A row of women and children pass by the bursar where they turn in all their valuables. They leave their clothes outside and the naked women and children go to

bathe in barracks specially erected for that purpose. The women and children disappear into the barracks. It doesn't take long before their pitiful screaming can be heard. This lasts a short while and it is quiet again.

The same thing happens latter to the men. On the other side of the barracks they drag out the stiffened bodies wearing ghoulis expressions on their faces.

There is a rather risky grave-digging machine operating in Treblinka. Human hands would have been unable to fill up such graves every day. This was done by machines that dig day and night and regularly prepare the deep mass graves for the transports of arriving Jews.

The graves are filled up by the machines and the are, covered over and compressed by the same machines when the graves have been filled with enough human bodies.

There are days when the whole transport cannot be killed off with gas. And maybe the vampires are thirsty for a little human blood, why not spill a little? So they gather together a group of children, line them up on the edge of a deep pit and a machine gun puts an end to their young lives. The tiny swallows fall shattered into the deep pit.

[HERE INSERT TWO DIAGRAMS WITH THE FOLLOWING CAPTIONS:

"Plan of the Treblinka Death Camp. Field 1. Top--the train platform; left: place where Jews turned over the belongings they had brought with them; right: the way to the gas chambers and barracks for undressing."

"Plan of the Treblinka Death Camp. Field 4. Top left: Gas chambers in a whole field of mass graves.

"(Archives of the Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland")

Treblinka was not only a grave for the Jews of Poland. We were told that in the fall of 1942 Jews from Belgium and France were brought to Treblinka. They came dressed in their holiday finery carrying their belongings. They believed that they were being resettled in the east where they would be taken care of.

In 1943 there were rumors that Jews from Holland were also being taken to Treblinka. There was a notice in the German press that on April 10, Dutch Jews from several districts had to report for deportation to the east.

An unknown little corner in Poland was destined to be the mass grave of European Jewry--a little spot of woods was to be the Holy of Holies for millions of Jewish lives.

--BIALA, SEPTEMBER 1943. WRITTEN IN A HIDEOUT IN A GARDEN OUTSIDE OF TOWN.⁰

⁰ Translator's Note: This is how Franz Suchomel, a former S.S. guard at Treblinka, described the extermination process at Treblinka during the spring of 1943, when the camp was murdering Jews at the rate of 12,000 to 15,000 human beings a day:

"The trains left Malkinia station for Treblinka station. It was about six miles. Treblinka was a village. A small village. As a station, it gained in importance because of the transport of Jews. Thirty to fifty cars would arrive. They were divided into sections of ten or twelve or fifteen cars and shunted into Treblinka Camp and brought to the ramp. The other cars waited, loaded with people, in the Treblinka station. The windows were closed off with barbed wire so no one could get out. On the roofs were the 'hellhounds,' the Ukrainians or Latvians. The Latvians were the worst. On the ramp, for each car, there stood two Jews from the Blue Squad to speed things up. They said, 'Get out, get out. Hurry, hurry!' There were also Ukrainians and Germans."

"[The job of the Red Squad was] to carry the clothes taken off by the men and by the women up here immediately."

QUESTION: "How long was it between the unloading at the ramp and the undressing, how many minutes?"

ANSWER: "For the women let's say an hour in all. An hour, an hour and a half. A whole train took two hours. In two hours it was all over. [Between the time of arrival] and death."

* * *

"Usually the men waiting who sat there, or there, were sent straight up via the 'funnel.' The women were sent last. At the end. They had to go up there too, and often waited here. Five at a time. Fifty people--sixty women with children. They had to wait here until there was room [in the gas chambers]. Naked! In summer and winter."

QUESTION: "Can you describe this 'funnel' precisely? What was it like?....

ANSWER: "It was about 13 feet wide.... On each side were palisades... .

QUESTION: "Walls?"

ANSWER: "No, barbed wire. Woven into the barbed wire were branches of pine trees. You understand? It was known as 'camouflage.' There was a Camouflage Squad of twenty Jews. They brought in new branches every day from the woods. So everything was screened. People couldn't see anything to the left or right. Nothing. You couldn't see through it. Impossible. "

QUESTION: "Treblinka, where so many people were exterminated, wasn't big, was it?"

ANSWER: "It wasn't big. Sixteen hundred feet at the widest point. It wasn't a rectangle, more like a rhomboid. You must realize that here the ground was flat, and here it began to rise. And at the top of the slope was the gas chamber. You had to climb up to it."

QUESTION: "The 'funnel' was called the 'Road to Heaven,' wasn't it?"

ANSWER: "The Jews called it the "Ascension," also the "Last Road."

QUESTION: "I need to see it. The people go into the 'funnel.' Then what happens? They are totally naked?"

ANSWER: "Totally naked. Here stood two Ukrainian guards. Mainly for the men. If the men wouldn't go in, they were beaten with whips. The men were 'driven' along. Not the women. They weren't beaten."

QUESTION: "Why such humanity?"

ANSWER: "I didn't see it. Maybe they were beaten too."

QUESTION: "Why not? They were about to die anyway."

ANSWER: " At the entrance to the gas chambers, undoubtedly."

* * *

ANSWER: "In the 'funnel' the women had to wait. They heard the motors of the gas chambers. Maybe they heard people screaming and imploring. As they waited, 'death panic' overwhelmed them. 'Death panic' makes people let go. They empty themselves, from the front or the rear. So often, where the women stood, there were five or six rows of excrement."

* * *

"That's how they were finished off."

QUESTION: "That was the technique?"

ANSWER: "Yes, the technique. You must remember it had to go fast."

In C. Lanzmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 107 - 111; 118 - 119.

CHAPTER EIGHT

STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

A. The Search for a Hiding Place

We were using the corn to conceal ourselves during the day. But we could see that the cutters were rolling up their sleeves to harvest the crop and that in a short time the fields would be bare, and could therefore no longer serve as a hideout for us.

On Tuesday, July 20, 1943, late at night we reached our goal, the Prokhovnya. We started looking around for a place to store our bags of bones, where they would be out of human sight.

We soon saw that it was impossible to get squared away in the walls. We decided to hide in the concrete bunkers where once, in the good days, ammunition had been hidden. However, we could not find the entrance to the bunkers. Since the day was starting to break outside and we had to hide ourselves quickly, we climbed up into an attic of the first house intending to make ourselves a more permanent refuge later that night.

We spent the day in the attic in peace. Since some christians who had been friendly with my family, had a large garden with a barn outside of town, I decided to go there and try to chat with them about a hiding place or at least to try and get them to provide us with some food.

That night Shmuel Gviaze went off to a christian friend of his who lived in the vicinity of the Prochowvnia to talk with him about getting us something to eat. I went off to see the christians with the garden together with Pinhas Pretter, who knew the way. We planned to speak to them the following morning.

We arrived quickly at the garden, where we feasted on different fruits and fell asleep under a young fir tree.

When we awoke from our sleep, there was a beautiful sunrise spilling light throughout the garden, which was surrounded by a tall fence. Only now was I able to appreciate the magnificent beauty of the garden.

I managed to see the christians during the day. Unfortunately, I was unable to convince them, for who would want to risk the lives of an entire family to save the life of another?

It was just at that time, by chance, that a christian family was arrested in that area giving rise to a rumor that the arrest had been made for giving food to Jews. No wonder then that our christian friends were particularly frightened.

That night we returned to our group. The mood was somber. We could not get into the bunkers because they could only be opened with an automatic mechanism which had been destroyed. We could not find anywhere in which to set up a hideout. Moreover, the provisioning of nine men was also a major problem.

Shimshon Justman, Yehoshua Hoffer and I decided to set out for Janów. Hoffer assured us that we would be able to take care of ourselves in his town. In the meantime we had to stay a few more days here, because Hoffer had a christian friend nearby who had a barn. Hoffer wanted to bargain with him about allowing us to set up a hiding place in the barn.

We had to leave the attic at the Prokhovnya because we had been discovered by a little shepherd. We had to get away fast back into the fields.

We did not have anything to eat. Justman and Hoffer went off to a neighboring settler's house to buy some food. They met a peasant who promised to deliver food to us.

On the night of Sunday, July 25, they went off to the christian and brought back some food. They deposited money with him for future deliveries.

The settler suggested that they hide out at his place. He showed them a cellar in the barn where you could easily make a hideout. They told him that they have a third friend who would be hiding with them. The peasant agreed to hide all three of us. He said that he would let us know about the price he was asking on Monday night, when they would come to pick up the food that had been ordered.

The three of us awaited impatiently for Monday night to come. We hated lying in the hay. We could see that the group had to split up into smaller units, since it would be impossible for nine men to get a hideout or food. Moreover, the fields were now getting bare and there would be no crops to hide us.

On Monday night Shmuel Gviazde and his wife said goodbye to us and headed off in the direction of Siedlice.

Justman and Hoffer were away meeting their peasant to bring some food and water and to conclude the arrangements on the hiding place. Five people stayed behind sitting in the harvested corn field, midst corn sheaves, impatiently waiting for our friends to return. We could suffer from severe hunger pains. I was quite curious about what had happened with the hideout.

As we lay hidden among the corn sheaves left out to dry, we heard the footsteps of our friends. We were in somewhat higher spirits at the thought of them bringing something to eat and drink, our feet actually began to carry us out to meet them, but we did not dare go. We had first to hear their password, since these days, when different bands of thieves and partisans wandered the night, one had to be very careful.

But we heard the steps of many people. We could clearly hear one of our friends pleading about something to one of them. It was immediately clear to us what had happened: they were looking for us; our unfortunate friends had been captured.

One of the search party rode out on a bicycle. He rode for a few minutes and returned. We hid ourselves deeper in the corn sheaves and held our breath.

Hours went by and our friends had not returned. It was clear to us that this was the work of our sly peasant. Knowing that there was a group of Jews with money here in the field, he went out of his way to offer us food on Monday night. And in order to win their confidence, he offered them a hiding place; at the same time he organized a gang to come and rob us.

The few hours we had left began to pass by. We could not stay among the corn sheaves any longer. We got away to a barley field where we lied a whole day still shaking from the tragedy of the night before. For a whole day we lay there without a bit of bread or a drop of water. And as if to spite us the sun singed our bodies. It seemed as if we would melt away today. Thirst tormented us so that it was hard just to utter a word.

I was terribly exhausted. Especially painful was the loss of my friend, Shimshon Justman, with whom I had lived together and had shared months of suffering and pain.

We could not hold out any longer without water, but to leave the barley field in the bright of day would be dangerous. Furthermore, the water was far away and we had nothing in which to bring it back. What is more, the water vessels had disappeared together with our friends. Still Mrs. Cohen decided to risk it and left with a small can for the water. After waiting anxiously for hours, we got a few drops of water, thanks to her, to wet our lips. It was hard to believe that we had to hold on throughout the hot day. But what a person cannot endure if he has to? Soon the day was over. The precious night arrived which gave us so much aid and soothed us with its kindness. Hungry, thirsty and broken after yesterday's misfortune, what was there left for us to do?

We decided to wait until midnight. Maybe our friends would make it back. And what if, G-d forbid, they did not, then we would go to the area of the garden with the barn, mentioned earlier. From there Mrs. Cohen could slip into town and buy something to eat and see a few friendly christians about getting a hiding place. In the meantime, we had to ask the christians with the garden to change money for us.

We sat in the same place in the field where the night before we had waited for our friends to arrive. Hour after hour we waited tensely for the arrival of our comrades. We detected the slightest movement in the air, but it was already twelve o'clock and those, who had put their lives on the line for us, were nowhere to be seen. We had to leave the place which had etched such a tragic spot in our memories. Our thoughts were with the friends who had vanished. But were they still alive? Would we ever see them again? But you, little peasant, we will remember you well. We don't know you, we don't even know your name, but the day will come, and we will live to see that day, when, little peasant, rest assured, we will come looking for you.

One of us, who came from Janów, turned in the direction of his town. Each one was drawn to his own area where he felt at home and hoped to be able to dig himself in and survive. He should only succeed and the others too who had left Mezritch with us that Sunday night. We wished them well with all our hearts and souls.

I can see the image of helpless Mrs. Yehudit Plier and her little son who left the Mezritch ghetto with us and did not know now which way to turn.

We were now a group of four people: Mrs. Sarah Cohen and her brother Pinhas Pretter, the young man Yitzhak Kanier from Seroock and I. We set out in the direction of the barn. Different plans and combinations about how to save our lives swept through my mind.

We slaked our thirst at a well along the way. At the garden we picked a few not yet ripe apples. But even this was a meal for us. Pretter and I remained in the

garden in order to see the christian in the morning about changing money and to try again to see about a hiding place. Mrs. Cohen went again into town to attempt to implement our previous plan. Yitzhak Kanier stayed hidden in the oats field not far from the garden.

This day was to be an historic one for us. We heard some political news from the kind christian. This gave us courage and stamina for the struggle for survival that lay before us.

First, we learned that Mussolini had been deposed. I imagined that maybe he, like us, was also looking for a hiding place... We heard that the Fascist party in Italy had been toppled and that a new government had been installed--it sounded like a revolution. Sicily was already occupied by English and American troops.

This means that there can be an end even to dictators. Perhaps we will not have to wait long for the end of that other bloodthirsty tyrant who drowned an entire world in blood. The christian assured us that the whole bloody spectacle would only last another six weeks. But where could we dig in for this short time? It would be particularly painful now, as we were almost at the end, to fall in the hands of the murderers, after all that we had been through.

When I began to speak with the christian again about a hiding place for us, I saw she had tears in her eyes. I saw that the discussion was very difficult for her. Almost without looking at me she said, "If it was only a threat of going to jail, or a fine, I would have thought twice about it. But it is a matter here of life or death. We, too, want to survive these few weeks." We were not hungry at least that day. The christian took care of that problem.

In the evening when we had all come back together, we first reported on the political news and celebrated the occasion by eating some bread...

Mrs. Cohen brought us certain promises about hiding places from town. But we did not place great hopes on these. These tidings were brought to us by Mrs. Cohen, as she had done several times, risking her life by going into town.

We had to get out of the oats field as well, for if we didn't, then early one beautiful morning the peasants would come crowding into the field with their scythes and break our bones well for the negligible damage which we may have caused the oats by hiding out in them.

We moved over into a field of "Lubin" (a plant used to fertilize crops). We spent the day in the Lubin and the night on straw in the barn at the garden. We filled bottles with water from the garden to last a whole day, and stocked up on cucumbers and apples.

The days passed by and our minds worked without stopping: where should we go now? Soon even the Lubin would be harvested and we would have no way out. All our plans and combinations had come to naught.

Outside in the meantime we were in the midst of the hot days of Av.⁰ As much water as we had in the field, it was too little. The heat intensified our thirst, even though we constantly drank water. Our lips were parched. The sky was filled daily with bright sunshine from which we could not shield ourselves. The days passed slowly and we could hardly wait for evening to run to the well and refresh ourselves with a little cold water. It was so monotonous and tedious, we lay for whole days without doing anything.

After the heat came heavy clouds that drenched us with rain; after which we yearned for the hot days. We felt as if we and our clothes were going to rot from the rain. If during the heat of the day we lay in the sandy field and roasted our naked flesh, we were now lying during the rains in pools of water in water-logged clothes.

It was no pleasure to eat. We were too lazy to get up even for a little piece of bread. Life had finally become loathsome. Sometimes you would lie there and think: You don't want to be killed by the murderers, but it may have been a mistake to have jumped from the train. It would have been easier to have been killed with a congregation of Jews in Treblinka, where your loved ones now rested for all eternity.

Lying soaked to the bone, you would think on such days, your courage failing, about going voluntarily to your death. You said to yourself: "How wonderful it would be if Mother Earth would just open up and swallow me whole."

B. Building Our Own Graves

When lying in the field under open skies became too unbearable and we realized we had nowhere else to go, we hatched a crazy scheme which could have only been conceived in the mind of a reckless youth. But this is precisely what we had become over time.

We decided to take a chance and make two small graves for ourselves right in the middle of the magnificent garden, without anyone knowing about it.

We had neither materials nor tools for the work. Moreover, we could only work on the project a few hours each night. To build bunkers like these you needed

⁰ Translator's Note: The eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar which fall roughly in late July and early August.

wood and where could you get that? We had no alternative but to go into the woods at night and chop down a few trees. This was really risky, but what did we have to lose?

On the way into the woods we came across a barn and a kitchen that the Germans had intended for use as a camp for Jews, who were engaged to drain the bogs. As the barn stood there empty, it struck us that there might be something of use to us there.

"Today's Tuesday," one of us shouted, "that's a lucky day for Jews; our venture will be a lucky one too!" "It should only be so," we all answered. We started off looking for materials. We carried shovels with us as well as a small, dull hatchet, which we could use either as work tools or as weapons in case we had to defend ourselves.

Just as we emerged on to the road, we saw a bicycle approaching. To our utter surprise, we saw a German riding it. He kept on going, however. After he got a few meters past us, he started whistling to give him courage, since he just escaped from danger. Had he wanted to arrest us, we would have taken care of him with the shovels and hatchet on the spot.

After walking for about an hour, we arrived at the spot. We quietly pried open a little window in the kitchen near the barn. Kanier and Pretter crawled inside. To our great joy, we saw building materials of all kinds there, just what we needed. It was as if they had been put on display especially for us. We started removing the materials through the window.

We worked hard to transport the wood into the garden. It was a distance of about six kilometers. We hid the wood in some buckwheat that was still standing in the field.

Before daybreak we selected a spot in the garden for our first bunker among some thick fir trees. During the day we thought about how to organize the work. Just then night fell and we went off in high spirits to work.

The most difficult problem for us was: where to put so much excavated earth so as not to leave any trace thereof? We decided to scatter the earth on the road that ran by the garden fence.

While we were spreading the earth at night it seemed to us that it did not look any different from the soil on the road. In daylight, however, the difference was quite noticeable; only we were not able to see this during the daytime. We carried the earth in a backpack and in a bag. Who would have figured that we had to remove so much earth from a little grave that measured only two meters long, one meter wide and 1.3 meters deep?⁰

⁰ Translator's Note: That is, 6.5 feet x 3.3 feet x 4.3 feet.

We worked for several hours a night. After three nights work we were already installed in a tiny bunker. We were overjoyed at the fact that we finally had a roof over our heads.

Despite all our precautions, however, we were soon discovered. The christian's trained eye immediately discovered the connection between the scattered earth and several broken branches in the fir trees. She approached our bunker.

Had we been dealing with some other christian, we would have had to leave right away. But since these two good-hearted christians took pity upon us, the discovery of our bunker was actually a blessing. As it turned out, they did not want was to have to get food for ourselves which would have endangered both us and them. They provided everything that we asked for. Supplying the food was not so much a mercenary as a motherly act. There are no words to describe their faithful attentiveness to us and our needs. As soon as something important happened in the political realm, they would come to us with the news to bolster our courage and endurance for our harsh existence. The way they reacted when they saw our bunker was wonderfully human. One of the sisters said to one of us: "Well, it looks like you succeeded with your hideout. May it bring you good luck. Try to act carefully and properly. I hope that you manage to survive this difficult time." --there were too few such events to record in the martyrology of Polish Jewry.

After some more hard work we were on the threshold of readying the entrance to the bunker. It had to be built secretly and disguised in such a way that someone standing at the bunker would not realize that human beings were concealed under the ground. This difficult task was also solved by our master carpenter ("stoler"), Kanier.

A bunker is really a grave for the living. But we completely forgot that living humans need to have air. This rather "commonplace" commodity in every day life was simply not considered by us in building the bunker. Before the entrance was, three of us had to crawl inside while Pretter, who still needed to talk with the christians, covered the entrance with three boards and shoveled earth on top. After sleeping for several hours, Kanier woke up choking--he had no air to breathe. He started tearing off his clothes and woke us out of our sleep. I grasped what was happening. I quickly kicked out the boards at the entrance way a little and let in that most precious commodity, to wit: air.

After a spending a week working on the first bunker, we set about building a second one also among the fir trees.

We worked hard at night; the sweat poured from us. During the day we lay in the still filthy excavations, having no time even to wash ourselves--we were dirty and filled with lice. We spent the better part of our daily routine driving from off our bodies and clothes, Hitler's allies-- lice.

When the bunkers had been finished for a while and we had been lying in them for whole days without anything to do, we decided to transform them into underground staterooms. To install conveniences in and embellish them, particularly when the lumber was a total of six kilometers away, well....

Several times we made nightly raids for building materials. The precious, friendly night concealed us from human eyes like a devoted mother. We walked heavily laden with lumber, singing the Polish song:

"The Night belongs to us,
besides her we have nothing at all."

C. In the Bunkers.

Today, as we lie in our "luxury" cabins, we understand for the first time how dangerous and risky the work was that we had carried out over the course of a month and how lucky we had been. There were military positions located very close to our hideouts. Every night they could have heard our banging around. And what could have happened, we consider today in terror, if our shovel or the weak, dull hatchet stopped being obedient during the work and we had remained neither here nor there [?]. But, that it ended well is certainly good. Our hopes of being able to survive the storm increased.

We were quite proud about building our hiding places. Building architects might do well to familiarize themselves with this branch of construction science. Who can tell? Maybe one day they could find a use for it....

As soon as our hideouts became a little more sanitary and we had lined the walls and the wooden floors with straw mats, we took a bath. We splurged on well water and soap and even changed our underwear. And when we were clean, and had even put some "comfort" items in the bunkers, such as shelves to put things on, lamps and clothes hooks, our appetite for food grew. Our desire for food increased and we yearned for a little home cooking.

We actually put together a little Primus-stove, on which our landlady cooked us plates of tasty foods. We were living in a magnificent garden in which there were so many things which our plates could use.

Our landlady would even do our wash at nights in the garden by moonlight boiling it in hot water on our little stove. We dried the clothes in the hideouts.

Everything that we needed was provided for us by our new, loving mothers, the two christian sisters, with the help of their young workers.

In the evenings, when there were no more improvements to be completed and it was warm and fragrant outside, we would take a walk around the wonderful, beautiful garden, looking yearnfully at the town. You wanted to laugh at the fact that here you were hiding out right under the nose of the enemy. You felt like shouting: "Hitler, go to hell! I mock you. Maybe in time you will order yourself a grave from me...."

You wanted to laugh when in fact you were really saying that "I feel like weeping," you had to keep the tears inside. Our hearts had been touched by such cruel pain. You looked at the town of your birth, where you had once known joy and hope,--everything had vanished in a flash. There where you were born, had lived, worked, suffered and rejoiced--you dared not set foot today. There were strangers living in the houses, which you had built with your own blood, sweat and tears, while you had to live buried alive in a grave. There nearby in town, strange men ruled, murderers from Berlin, Hamburg--vampires from Dusseldorf. And you stand here in the still of the night outside the town walls, only looking at them, forbidden to take one step closer.

And during the day, when you lie in the cabin of your "subterranean ship" and sleep evades you, mournful thoughts torment you. Even though you once dreamed about finding a hiding place like this where you could save your naked body, now that you have finally attained it, it all seems so disgusting. Sometimes the thought occurs to you, maybe I should do what that old woman in the shtetl of Piszczac near Biala did? After all the Jews had left the shtetl, only one old lady was left. She got dressed in her burial shrouds which she had prepared in advance, walked to the village cemetery and asked a gentile to fetch a gendarme and tell him that an old Jewess was waiting for him. The gendarme came at once, out of breath, and after looking around found the woman in her shrouds in some pit. She asked him to shoot her a wish he quickly fulfilled.

But what an old Jewess could do, we, the young, remnant of Polish Jewry, who were still alive today, could not.

Why am I still clinging to a life which can offer me nothing? With my whole being I belong to that place where my beloved wife now lies. My future life will be stagnation, filled with bitterness.

And would it make any difference if none of us were to survive? Perhaps we would only be a nuisance to our brothers and sisters across the sea. It may be that we will look with envy upon their families; it may be that when our jealous eyes stare at their families and homes, we will disturb their harmonious lives.

And how difficult it will be for people to believe that we have really gone through such tortures! I, too, would have a hard time believing it, if I had not seen it myself. And might they also think that there is something suspicious about someone who remained alive. They might wonder, how is it possible that when millions of Jews were killed, the rich, strong and brave among them, you, a weak, poor laborer, managed to slip out. Is it really not suspicious after all? Now go try and tell them how horrible your fate was, even when death spared you. You repeatedly asked yourself: "Why after all does one have to leave the world at age 70? Would it not be sufficient to say farewell to life at the age of thirty-some?"

Our christian mothers, who kept pumping courage into us, brought us their good political news every day. We could see the murderers being cast from their thrones...the day of judgment was approaching.

Soon, the christian encouraged us, in a few short weeks it would all end. Peace is coming quickly. She did not know, the pitiable christian, that, although we lie in our underground ships waiting for the moment when we will be able to come out into freedom, when we hear the word "peace" our hearts skip, not from joy, but from sorrow. "What will we have when peace does come?" we would have said. "To whom will we turn?" "Will we have a home in which to spend our first night in freedom?" "How tragic and painful that moment will be!" My heart will suffer why I live to experience this moment while my wife and child did not. Why did I deserve to witness this moment when millions of people who had also yearned to see this day did not survive? Why weren't my father, my mother, my sister and my relatives not destined to see this day?

And in the meantime we lie and wait for peace, anticipating that any minute now, the christians will come running, out of breath to tell us the good news. We all joke: we won't know what do without all the amenities in our hiding places--we won't want to leave our underground cabins.

The first anniversary of the deaths of loved ones is already fast approaching.

How can I forget that it was only a year ago in the beginning of August that the first tragic loss in our family occurred? A loss that cut deeper than anything and rendered me incapable of trying to save the rest.

How can I forget that dark day when the lives of my three precious sisters were snuffed out?

Is it a year already? And it seems like it all happened only yesterday. Images of those painful days flicker before me. I see my parents sitting frozen and mute from the sudden misfortune.

How can I forget the image of that Yom Kippur Eve? My mother had lit and blessed the candles. Several friends had come to greet us. Suddenly mother burst out crying spasmodically, beating her head with her hands. The image shook me to the bone and will live with me until the day I die.

Today now that I am alone, when rivers of blood have flowed before my eyes, when my feet have tread over mountains of the dead, when I have become so ambivalent about death, I live through those painful days over and over again, when the loss of three sisters in one moment could still shake my nerves.

Here I am lying in my subterranean stateroom. The sun is shining in this 25th day of August which is yet another death anniversary (Yahrzeit).

On this cursed day a piece of my life was ripped off and tossed far away, far from me--yet here I stay with such sorrow in my heart and with a yearning that cannot be stilled--that it is hard for me to imagine how I will be in a condition to live on with such woe and loss--even if I do succeed in coming out of this grave in one piece. For it was on this day that I lost my devoted companion for life, my never-to-be-forgotten, darling, beloved wife and baby daughter.

Who could have imagined that I would at such a young age have to survive the wife I adored -- and carry with me such boundless grief.

It's already over a year. Yet I have not laid any flowers on their unknown graves, not a tear have I shed on their resting place, although in my mind I go there to their graves often--only evil autumn winds rock my loved ones in eternal sleep.

Sometimes it seems that it all happened yesterday; the images of the tragedy are still so fresh. Sometimes you have the feeling that many years have gone by since you left home and you begin yourself to doubt whether you ever had a home. Such thoughts bring to mind the poem of the poet Rosenfeld,⁰ who, I think, wrote once:

"Once you had a land,
Once you had a home,
Oh, how deep it stirs...."

⁰ Translator's Note: Morris Rosenfeld (b. Poland 1862, d. U.S.A. 1923) was among the most talented Yiddish poets of social protest. His most renowned collection of poetry, Songs of the Ghetto, appeared in 1898, caused a stir in American literary circles.

Now if the days already mentioned were Yahrzeit days, they cannot hold a candle to the first day of September⁰. That day was the reason for every misfortune that has befallen us in the course of these last four years.

Look back at these four years and see what has happened. You ask yourself: How could human beings carry out such a holocaust? To have murdered Polish Jewry which numbered more than three million souls.

The scattered remnants of the holocaust of Polish Jewry were struggling with their last ounce of strength to hold on to their accursed life--hidden away from the light of day and from the sight of mankind. If the hurricane continued to rage much longer, a significant part of even this tiny remainder would be killed.

You lie here in your luxuriant grave with your mournful thoughts, while above outside there are such happy sounds-- the garden is full of joy. It is Sunday and some christian friends of ours have come here for a walk. Life goes on above, while down here in the grave death rules. In the afternoon when the light starts to dim in the secret windows of the cabin and shadows begin to spread over the walls, there is quiet knock at our bunker. We open the door quickly and our angel, the christian, regales us with a bit of Polish news. She tells us that Italy has now surrendered. She gives us a few newspapers and we start searching between the lines.

Another day of sad thoughts is rapidly approaching, the 26th of September. It was on this day a year ago that they started making Biala County Judenrein. After only a few bloody days, the murderers' dream became a reality.

Today, after a year of aimless wandering and homelessness, as I lie under my birthplace and can barely live with the memories of my past, I hear tales of what happened to the Jews. I gather them up with a stricken heart.

The christian tells us that the remaining Jews who were still alive at the work camp at the airfield had now been shot.

Today there were only about 50 Jews left working at the Gestapo and maybe a handful of Jewish workers in the Malaszewicz camp.

Every trace of Jewish life was being erased. Thus, for example, they had demolished the synagogue and the Beit Midrashim. They had removed the address signs bearing the name of Jewish residents from every house and replaced them with new ones that did not indicate the owner's identity.

From time to time I hear that the Gestapo has arrested individuals who had posed as christians and were in fact Jews. It was not difficult to imagine what

⁰ Translator's Note: The Author is, of course, referring to the anniversary of September 1, 1939, the day on which the Nazis invaded Poland and the destruction of Polish Jewry began.

happened to these people. At a time when one noticed some moderation toward the christian population on the part of the Nazis, the Jews were treated with the same sadism and murderousness as they were in the beginning. In any case, how could one really talk about a moderating trend toward Polish Jewry? The Jews simply did not exist in this world any longer; they were lying in the deep mass graves at Treblinka. And if a negligible percentage were still hiding out in secret, would the Germans change their behavior on account of these miserable few? For better or for worse, Hitlerism was born in hatred of the Jews and would disappear with it as well.

The calendar now indicates a date that is for me particularly tragic: October 6, another Yahrzeit day. It was on this day a year ago that the two bloody resettlement actions occurred in Mezritch, during which my beloved mother was swept away to Treblinka to rest forever near her daughter-in-law and granddaughter.

After having lost her three daughters, mother's life was all but over. In Mezritch, as I was later told, she made not the slightest effort to save herself. She went by herself to the square and reported to the transport.

How good it would be now: if after everything, I too would rest next to you. Death itself is not so frightening and perhaps it is the best solution. The moments before death are difficult, but you can get through them too.

Outside it is autumn now. I find myself strongly influenced by Nature which is now withering away and dying out. It seems as if the same thing is happening to me. Like Nature I, too, will fall into a deep slumber, but will I, like Nature, awake again to go on living in the spring?

The garden, which only a short while ago was so full of life and blossoming, seems now rather funereal. The rustle of trees in summer had carried with it playful mischief and joyful laughter, now in autumn, the noise sounded like quiet weeping. To catch a few rays of sun during the day in our grave was very hard, just like a new product which you see only on cards today...

How long will this trail of pain and torment last? We could tell from the German press itself, that the wild, bloodthirsty beast had been badly bloodied, yet it appears that it will not lose its fangs so quickly.

We are now well into Autumn. When we first arrived in our garden it radiated its splendor. Now yellow and red leaves are blowing aimlessly on the earth, as if they had been filled with blood. The trees stood bare and saddened.

What do we do all day and night in our graves? In the evening we all sit together in front of a warm bowl of food. We chat about different matters pass the time away playing "Damka."⁰

⁰ Translator's Note: A game similar to checkers.

During the day when there is something to read, we are transported through fantasy into the world of the author. It is not easy to get books, however. Here, too, German vandalism showed what it was capable of---all Jewish libraries had been destroyed.

If there was not anything else to do during the day, we just slept. We usually slept a lot, as if it were our protest against the world of the twentieth century. Deep in sleep we were visited regularly by brutally tortuous dreams. The truth is, life here in the staterooms is not so terrible when you compare the lot of the dozens and hundreds of people wandering the forests in a constant struggle with death.

We spent the whole day after Shabbat, November 6 - 7, in one of the hideouts discussing various problems. When emerged at daybreak to go back into our cabin, and the blue of the early twilight pushed its way into our hideout, we found the garden clad in white. A blinding whiteness covered the fields and trees. The first snow had fallen during the night and snowflakes were still descending from the sky. One flake chased the next, as if in a hunt, seeking ever faster to cover the bloody earth in white innocence.

We shuffled into the hiding place very carefully so as not to leave any footprints behind. We worked out a whole plan for continuing our sojourn here in the garden, which, from now on, would have to be very restricted on account of the snow, lest someone notice footprints in the garden, G-d forbid. We came up with the idea of installing a telephone in the bunkers which would greatly reduce our movement. No sooner said than done. The telephone was ready in a snap. The hideouts were about 15 meters from one another.

Our telephone was quite a primitive device. It consisted of a hammer on a small board linked by a thread from one bunker to the second. The thread was moved on the ground between the fir trees unnoticed. We spoke to each other using a system of knocks. When the line is pulled, the hammer knocks in our bunker and tells us that the our food is ready and that we are being requested to come and eat.

When we crawl out of our graves at night, we glance over to the south where a camp of Russian prisoners of war is located. There is a possibility that the camp is no longer there, in which case it is a sign that our redemption is getting closer. But night after night we can see the electric lights still burning at the camp and can detect an echo of mournful Russian melodies. We know that the German murderers are still here and our place is back in the grave.

When the bloody resettlement actions against the Jews were still going on, Pollack friends of mine would frequently say, that the Germans would not be able to do anything to the Poles. I pointed out the dissimilarities between their situation and ours. When I asked them how the Poles reacted to the murder of their intelligentsia, the answer was that they, the intellectuals, were to blame. Now we know how other peoples respond to German murder.

The Poles pointed out that it was because of them that the Germans had eased up somewhat. And so on Shabbat, November 13, the town loudspeaker announced that at 12:00 noon 10 pollacks were to be shot in Freedom Square. The murderers had kept their word. Promptly at 12 o'clock, the Security Police surrounded Freedom Square where there were a number of pollacks. A carload of Gestapo pulled up in front of the post building. They picked up two groups of five pollacks, their eyes blindfolded. They shot them right in front of every one. There were several youths among the dead.

At the same time, the Gestapo shot another 30 pollacks in another place outside of town. We did not know what this action was all about. It was typical, however, that even though Polish society was convinced that the end of Hitler's bloody regime was fast approaching, they lacked the courage to respond meaningfully to such nefarious deeds.

And if this was not enough to arouse Polish spirits, a few days later the same bloody scene was repeated all over again in Freedom Square, only this time there were more Polish victims.

Winter arrived and life in the graves became even more difficult. Because of the snow we could not move lest we leave footprints behind. The christian worker tells us: "I used to like the snow, but today when I see snow, I get so sad and frightened." We also had to think about preparing and hiding a few potatoes for winter so that they did not have to deliver food to us too often. The christian's worker did not have any reason to come to the barn these days, and so was coming only once a week now.

We gave this considerable thought and decided to make a small pit in our hiding place in which to store away a few potatoes. As soon as we thought up an idea, it was implemented.

We now have a small potato cellar about 1 1/2 meters deep⁰ that will be enough for one month.

We finally got hold of a scrap of a newspaper in which we read that the eastern front had moved a closer to us. But liberation from our graves was still a way off.

We lay in the grave and shivered from the cold, because we were eventually naked and didn't have anything with which to cover ourselves.

Christmas came and we relayed our holiday greetings to our christians by way of their worker. The two christian women sent some holiday items to us.

⁰ Translator's Note: That is, about 5 feet deep.

Another year is ending once again. It has been a bloody year for us Jews. This was the year that marked the end of Polish Jewry. One recalls how much hope the already tiny Jewish community in Poland had for 1943. We figured that we could hang on with our souls. How disappointing this year turned out to be! The small handful of Jews left in Poland, hidden away in various holes, bids farewell to the old year, walking a tragic and bloody tightrope.

At precisely 12 o'clock midnight shooting breaks out not far from us. The christian world has welcomed the arrival of the New Year, 1944.

A New Year for the world! Somebody is definitely happy about it, but not us. We remember too well what happened when 1943 arrived, at whose threshold several dozen Jewish lives were cut down in Mezritch. This time we tremble at the thought of what may become of those Jews still working at the Gestapo and quartered in town at the home of the tailor, Hanina Kashemacher, on Janów Street. They were guarded at night by Polish fire fighters. Unfortunately, our worst fears came true. According to what the christian worker told us, the remaining Jews were all taken out in a car on Friday morning, December 31 and probably shot.⁰ After 15 months of hard labor, the Jewish workers were paid their murderous thanks. Even such a tiny group was not allowed to remain alive.

The garden hibernated throughout the winter. It was white everywhere. Who would think that here under the snow among the fir trees, there were men lying buried alive in graves, with the hope smoldering in their hearts that one day they would be able to look out on a liberated world? Who would suspect that under the frozen ground of the dead and devastated garden, men were living who would get up during the wintery nights and crawl out of their graves in order to begin their nightly routine, gazing at the star-filled sky, where the round, white moon drifts in and out from behind the clouds?

Although the winter nights were rather long, they passed quickly for us and were filled with a variety of labors.

After warming ourselves with a hot meal, I gave everyone courses in bookkeeping and Russian. When the classes were over, we began playing "Damka" [checkers] and chess, the pieces for which I managed to carve in two evenings. I taught the Latzere-brothers chess strategy.⁰

A most bedevilling problem for us was getting water. Although the well in the garden was deep, about 15 meters,⁰ it provided very little water. If that were not enough, the rope used to break leaving us holding piece of rope while the remaining

⁰ Author's original note: As we later learned, the workers were not shot by the Gestapo but were only transferred to the camp at the airfield. From there they were eventually taken to Lublin at the end of April or beginning of May 1944.

⁰ Translation ???

⁰ Translator's Note: That is, 50 feet.

piece with the cup, lay at the bottom of the well. With great effort we were able to pull up the cup with a rope.

After many weeks we got a few newspapers again and finally got ourselves reoriented about what was happening on the eastern front, the most important one for us.

The "Völkischer Beobachter"⁰ admitted that the Russians had launched their winter offensive and driven a deep wedge into the Germans' southern front, that stretched all the way to west of Sarno.

Help was so close, but we were realistic about this and did not expect it to arrive in the next few weeks, barring some miracle.

We saw further how much more painful the bombs were that Allied airplanes were dropping over Germany.

Lying in the grave had become so tedious, that the boredom was actually dangerous. My longing for a human face, even an Aryan one, had not subsided...kindling within me a desire to toy with death: I committed a major "crime" by risking an excursion into my hometown.

When the evening shadows began their dance on the walls of my bunker, I crawled out and started walking over the fields into town. A dull hatchet was hidden inside my overcoat. It might be needed in case someone wanted to check whether I was legal. The axe would serve as my papers or as my identity card, as the Germans called it.

It was Friday evening. I crept in through the deep snow wearing my wooden clogs, since I had already ruined my leather shoes. My shoes are already covered completely with snow. A fog, which hung over the fields, now connected them to the cloud-filled sky. My route carried me over the Jewish cemetery, of which there was no longer any trace. Nearing the catholic cemetery, I realized for the first time that I had been walking on the graves of our grandparents. I whispered in silence: "Forgive me, my dear ones, for having disturbed your eternal rest. It is your grandson who is walking here, your grandson who just now crawled out of his own grave to catch a glimpse of the place where he was born. Maybe it would make you happy to know that Jewish feet are still walking this earth and that maybe one day they will come here to tell you that the bloody storm has passed?"⁰

⁰ Translator's Note: The _____ ("The People's Observer") was the principal Nazi printed propaganda organ, styled as a daily newspaper. Once commentator described it as "little more than a poster tricked out as a newspaper." R. Gruenberger, The 12-Year Reich: A Social History of Nazi Germany 1933 - 1945, p.433 (New York 1971).

⁰ Translator's Note: Forty-one years later I also returned to the erstwhile Jewish cemetery on a cold, gray, rainy day in June 1985. After chanting the memorial prayer "El Male Rachamim" ["God Full of Mercy"], I uttered my own personal prayer which by coincidence

Closer to town I could see people. My heart started beating faster. Death followed you like a shadow and could spring upon you at any moment.

The dark, unlit streets were full of snow. A few individuals would appear and then disappear. Now I was in the Jewish streets. Fear gripped me. There were empty spaces where Jewish homes had been torn up wherever you turned. Many houses stood uninhabited victims of the pogrom, doors and windows thrown open. It gave me the impression of a dead skull with rotting eye-sockets.

It seemed as if the pillaged houses were inviting me inside, asking: "Come inside, you who are among the last... come inside and feel our sadness... ."

I dropped by my friend, the Ethnic German, who froze as if he had seen a phantasm from the other world. I asked him if he possibly knew anything, about my brother in Lublin.⁰

The Ethnic German told me that he knew nothing about him. He told me that the political situation was extraordinary because the Red Army was now near Kowel and the Germans were surrounded on the eastern front. They had suffered a major defeat. In his opinion the Soviets would be here in 14 days or a month at the most.

I got a few things from him, thanked him, said goodbye and made my way back to my grave.

On my way back I could not help walking past our house. As I approached the house, it seemed as if, if the sound of my father's heartfelt "Shalom Aleichem" could be heard from within. Tears filled my eyes, my heart ached with longing. I felt like falling against the cold walls, kissing them and whisper to them quietly: "You solitary walls are all that is left for me from those times which are long gone and will never return again. How precious you are to me now!"

What a beautiful home we had; for me there is no other place. Now I have to wander back to the cold and dark bunker.

I stand in front of our house, which we built with our own blood, sweat and tears. I cannot seem to tear myself away. It is fortunate that it is pitch black all around me and no one notices me standing here. I am standing like a Jew before the Western Wall, "lehavdil."⁰

closely resembled the one recited by the Author during his clandestine foray into Nazi-occupied Biala in 1944.

⁰ Translator's Note: Nothing was ever heard of the author's brother, Joshua, ever again.

⁰ Translator's Note: "L'havdil" is an expression that religious and non-religious Jews employ to distinguish between the holy and the profane.

As I trudged the way back across the deep, snow-covered fields, the words of the Ethnic German kept ringing in my ears... "two weeks to a month." It should only be that this time the prophesy will come true.

Although the winter was an easy one and we could not really complain about it, it still weighed heavily on our morale, with its short, dreary days during which hardly a ray of light reached us in the graves. Above the graves black crows flew without end, their wild crowing torture to our ears.

You creep out to the barn once a week to pick up the provisions brought by the worker, you chat with him a while and all of the things you had hoped and dreamed of will soon, having been confronted with reality, dissolve, like snow in sunlight. Salvation is slinking along on the back road somewhere and cannot reach us.

That night, just as we were opening the grave to crawl outside, we were covered with an avalanche of snow which fell from the trees, filling the bunker itself with snow. Death is everywhere, as if in a wasteland.

Finally we got what have what we have been waiting for, the end of winter. According to the calendar it is now the beginning of spring, but like war, there were surprises all around us. Even nature has her caprices and the beginning spring was transformed into real winter. Now for the first time, snow was piling up in tall mountains. The frost did not retreat on account of the snow and it too only diminished only small proportion for the mild winter days⁰ The tiny pane in the grave window was etched with a frosty mosaic.

Weeks went by. Each day is expected to bring our redemption, which resists coming, just creeping. Life in the grave was boring. What had been earlier stately cabins were transformed once again in our minds into bleak, dark graves.

Recently we noticed a major movement of military personnel in our area. On Thursday, March 30, we started hearing wild screaming. When we looked out carefully from our bunkers, we noticed that some soldiers had torn out the garden fence on two sides and then workers went into the fields with shovels. What does this mean? We listened to see if they were going to do some work in the garden or vicinity, but it was quiet again. A fresh winter blizzard was raging.

Until now we had considered our garden a "safe" place. Now, on account of the two holes in the fence, it had become an open zone, into which anyone who wished to could enter at will. We were of the almost unanimous opinion that they were going to build trenches here.

⁰ Translation ???

The idea of leaving our bunkers and starting all over again to look for a new place terrified us. Where could one find a new hiding place now? Where will we go in such deep snow and ice. The thought of death (with which we were already "Pan-Brat" [bosom buddies] for a long time) did not frighten us so much as did the thought of the impossible life on the run and the suffering which lay in store for us before we said farewell to this earth.

The Soviet Army was now still at Kowel, a distance of 150 kilometers from us. However, we tried to be practical and realized that all of our strategic calculations were basically worthless.

We had hardly made it to the evening when we left the bunkers and just like landlords repaired the fence. The earlier two breaches ceased frightening us and by hammering the boards back together we started to calm down.

Our predictions were right on the mark. The next day they started digging trenches not far from the garden. We now had a new task: to go out each night to the work site and determine which direction the trenches were going in. We stood in the dark nights next to the pits and debated whether the trench line would eventually reach the garden; whether it would pass through the garden or avoid it altogether. Our existence depended upon this strategic assessment.

When the work on the trenches got too close to the garden, and the Germans early one morning again tore out the fence, we were now certain that the trench line would pass through the garden. It was now virtually certain that we would have to take up our hiking sticks once again.

Once more after a whole day immersed in depressing thoughts, we crawled out at night into the deep snow and for the second time patched up the fence. We looked back with affection at our snow-covered "luxury cabin." The fence had not been cut through any more than the night before and it was now clear that the excavation line would miss the garden. We breathed a little easier.

Our christians, who understood how dangerous the situation developing near our garden was, did not panic. To the contrary, they were calm in front of us. It was as if bringing us to redemption had become the natural thing for them to do. They viewed it as a matter of human respect. Besides we had a legitimate "grievance" against them, since they had taken us in here based on a misrepresentation, having assured us at that time that the war would not last more than six weeks. We now complained to them that were it not for their optimistic assurances we would never have crawled into the bunkers....

The christian "Wielkonoc" (Easter) arrived. Tasty holiday foods appeared once more on our table. Yes, it was true, our kind-hearted christians had not forgotten us even after we have spent eight months now in their garden. They brought us holiday presents--cakes and various kinds of meat.

We finished eating all the good things and mocked Hitler's murderers and the German general staff with its trenches right on top of our graves.

After the holiday, the snow and ice started melting. A short time later, the peasants began pulling their iron plows across the fields.

Our garden still lay bare. Here and there a blade of grass sprouted. You could smell spring in the air, which the birds heralded so magnificently in the early morning blue.

In honor of May Day, we had a nighttime spectacle in the form of a Soviet air raid on Brest-Litovsk, which we were able both to see and hear. Up to now we had only read about such air-raids in the German press, but now we were able to see it with our own eyes. We stood between some trees and stared at the turmoil in the distance. In several places in the sky we could see smoke clouds and small fires followed shortly thereafter by the echo of the exploding bombs. Searchlights combed the skies for the attacking aircraft, anti-aircraft guns sounded spewing forth colorful sparks.

It was now May. Four whole months of the new year have already gone by and we are still here. We wait and hope that any minute now something important will happen to shake the world and free us from our life in the grave.

We wait impatiently for the start of the invasion in Western Europe. True, we are far from the coast where the western invasion is expected, but we are under the impression from the German press that they, the Germans, would rather pull back German forces from the east and let the Bolsheviks advance, that leave the west to the Allies. And this is just what we need in our region. Time has made us so self-centered that our demands go no further than this: should the Soviets take our town, they would liberate us from the current situation and afterwards, let what ever happens happen. What else can one expect from people who have been living buried alive for a year? Freedom is apparently a powerful luxury for which one must wait a long time!

This is now the third year in which we have been waiting for news of an invasion in western Europe. This year our hopes are especially high.

The garden is getting greener minute by minute. The trees are in bloom. The fresh night air takes your breath away. We are not anxious for morning to come, when the sun shines so bright and warm, and we have to return to our bunkers.

Sometimes in order to ameliorate the sad memories, you tell yourself, that you are living in prehistoric times when your primitive ancestors lived just as you are now in their underground caverns. How were they able to survive in those days? Compared to them, we are living in the lap of luxury. But our minds were

still on guard and would not be consoled with foolish reveries. A voice cried out from somewhere deep in the recesses of your mind: "Your ancestors were truly free, but you---no. Your ancestors did not know anything better and, as a matter of fact, in their day it was a good thing to be living underground. But it was hell for a human being who had experienced all the 20th century had to offer and yet had to acknowledge all the horrors of this age.

I lie in my bunker annotating the destruction of our people and ask myself repeatedly: "Why are you jotting down these pathetic lines? Who knows what is waiting for you any minute and will your writings have any better fate than you yourself? Maybe it is just a way to kill the time? But it is certainly not a pleasant task. Terrible wounds are reopened over and over again. And what about this thought: even if these notes ever do see the light of day, who knows whether any sane person who has not lived through all this horror will ever have the patience to wade into such a bloody swamp?

We wander around the garden paths at night reviewing the whole of world politics. The "strategic plans" are all "clear" for us. Only one thing is rather hard for us to understand, why hasn't the Red Army taken our town yet?

Death, which has been following us like a shadow, now stares at us--its patients--face to face. This uninvited guest frequently greets us with a cordial handshake, thus driving us to our wit's end.

When on the evening of the second day of Shavuot we all gathered together from our bunkers, our friends from the other bunker gave us a piece of news that hit us like a bombshell: during the day as the owners of the garden were busy trimming a tree a christian friend of theirs had come to chat. The friend, glancing through the fir trees, suddenly called out: "Oh! There is some kind of a hole over there!" and went off immediately to the firs to investigate. He stuck his hand into the secret entrance and lifted up the door which concealed the entrance into the grave.

He quickly closed the bunker, but our friends did manage to hear as he said to himself: "There is some kind of door here and you can see where people have been walking here among the firs." They also heard the owner of the garden stutter something and try to change the subject. The christian might not have seen our friends in the bunker, since they had covered themselves with a black blanket. And it is possible that due to the darkness inside the bunker, the christian standing outside may not have been able to make out anything. I should mention here that the landlord, even though he spent a lot of time in the garden, almost never came up to our hiding places, since he wanted to be able to say that he knew nothing of their existence.

Our bunkers, which were well camouflaged during the day with grass, were very difficult to recognize. As it happened, that particular day a wind had blown the grass off the bunker door which is why a trained eye was able to spot it.

With the arrival of spring, the garden became a regular meeting place for the Polish elite who had nowhere to spend their free time and came here to enjoy the fresh air.

It was clear that this time we would not come away unscathed. After laying buried for more than nine months, we will now get an eviction notice and have to transfer ourselves to the fields, where hiding out is more dangerous and risky these days than it was last year.

Our plate of food remains untouched by evening. Who could ever think about eating when you were about to lose the roof over your head and become a vagabond again?

We awaited the eviction decree with pounding hearts. When the next day the worker knocked on the door of our grave as usual, we opened the door dejectedly and prepare ourselves for the harsh decree. But to our surprise, he did not mention anything about our fate.

When we all got together again that evening, the first question was: "What happened?" We started debating amongst ourselves about what might have occurred. We came to the conclusion, that the incident had ended well.

But our joy did not last long. The next morning the worker returned to our hideout and announced that we had been discovered and that we had to get away from here. The christians had sent him to tell us.

We asked the worker to tell the christians that we wanted them to come to us so that we could talk to them about something.

The younger christian came with lowered eyes, ashamed as if she had perpetrated the gravest possible crime against us. We tried to comfort her by saying that all that happened in the final analysis was that one hiding place had been discovered. In the worst case we could all squeeze together into the remaining as yet undiscovered hideout. In any case the only person who knew about the first bunker for the moment was the one who discovered it and he was a solid, understanding fellow. As a good friend he would certainly know that we need to keep this quiet. The matter was really not all that dangerous. If there was no other choice, we assured her that she would not have any aggravation on account of us and we would depart.

She looked at us compassionately and called out: "Where will you go without any help? Tomorrow I will go over to the fellow who discovered the hideout and see if he says anything about the second one. If not, everything will be fine."

We thanked her and went back into our grave. We thought a long time about this noble, kindhearted christian.

Several days passed as we waited impatiently for some word about the conversation with the fellow who had found the bunker. Finally as expected she came and reported to us the following: she had been to visit him and had asked him: "Did you find some kind of entrance door in our garden? My husband and I searched for it there but we found nothing suspicious."

"I, too, noticed nothing particularly suspicious there," the christian answered, "just some kind of a door over a small hole like a sewer or something..."

Whether the christian was playing dumb or he was really being honest was hard to tell. It was enough that our christian woman was content with the answer and let the matter drop. We, of course, were happy that the black cloud had lifted.

Lying once again peacefully in our graves our sorrowful thoughts were free to preoccupy us.

A little slip of paper fell into the bunker through a tiny hole and I heard footsteps receding from the hiding place. I stood up, picking up the little slip of paper. By the last rays of sunlight, I read: "Today, June 6, after midnight the invasion was launched between Cherbourg and Le Havre."

I read the note and could not believe my eyes. Could it really be true that the invasion in the west had really begun? And if so, would it really succeed? There was a second piece of news in the note: Rome had been taken by the Allies.

I moved back into the bunker. Our thoughts intensified. Bizarre thoughts flashed through my mind, but above all there was an image of millions of Jews who wanted so much to survive to this moment and had not earned the privilege. It seems as if at long last the foundations of the gigantic German war machine were crumbling. In a number of days, Hitler's beasts, now in desperate straits in the East, West and South, would soon be retreating to their own territory, digging in and turning every house into a fortress. But we here just wanted to get out of these graves in the meantime.

But weeks passed and our life in the bunker went on as usual, monotonous and depressing.

After having held out during the autumn, winter and spring in our hideouts, summer now threatened to drive us out. A heavy rain drenched our catacombs with water. It was utterly impossible to remain in one of the bunkers. For several days we had to house all four together in one grave until the second bunker was back in

operation. After this we were convinced about how hard it was to live in such cramped quarters. We had gotten very used to all our "comforts" over time.

The air in the bunkers during summer was stifling and all our foodstuffs spoiled. First the bread was covered with mold and was inedible; a lot of bread was wasted this way.

The battlefields came to life again on the Eastern Front by the end of June. This time, it seemed to me, Nazism is really under pressure which would crush and choke it. It is possible that this could last a while, but we in the hideouts clearly feel that the end of our underground existence is approaching.

There were signs that the eastern front was moving forward even here in the bunkers. Every night the Russian air force put on a spectacular show as they bombed German military objectives. The fires of the Russian prisoner-of-war camp had disappeared as they, too, had reached their comrades.

The town was in a panic as a result of the air raids and many fled at night to the fields. The Polish intelligentsia, the pitiful few that the Nazis had left alive, showed fear of the German control as manifested by the bloody Gestapo, during the last few days and dared not sleep in their own homes. It was on account of this that our life in the bunkers became particularly difficult, because the owners of the garden themselves along with their friends came to sleep in the barn. We have to leave our hideouts late at night returning only to hide early in the day. We could no longer enjoy strolling around the garden.

Germany has something new to "sell" of late. The German press is full of stories about a new revenge weapon against England, designated secretly as the "V-1".

In the meantime the Red Army is letting itself get "fooled" into penetrating deeper toward the west and is sending us, subterranean residents, greetings of cannon fire in the quiet, summer nights, which seems to say to us: "You have suffered so, just a little longer, we are coming and you will be free!"

You clearly feel now that these days in the hideout may be your last and that you will soon depart from here. You cast your eyes around the bunker walls, whose dampness has circulated in your lungs for months. You ask yourself: "Is it really happening this time? After having huddled here inside for a year, am I actually going to be leaving you, the walls of my grave?"

I lie in the grave submerged in thought. I hear a knock at the door, open it up and see the woman who saved me standing beaming with delight. "Well, this time I bring you really good news.-- Last night all the German offices were packed up and evacuated. The post office is not operating now. They say that the train headed off in the direction of Lukow. Brest-Litovsk is said to be in Russian hands since

yesterday. It is possible that Warsaw will be taken before our town, since the front is said to be broken and the Soviet spearhead is cutting through everywhere. In town the military is retreating. Our suffering has now finally come to an end."

Tears glisten in her eyes. I thank my redeemer for this truly important news and say to myself: "At this time anyone who has been out of touch with the situation in the streets must be careful about evaluating all of this."

The story about the Nazi offices being evacuated is truly glorious news. But what really made a strong impression on us was the fact that the post office was not functioning. The post office was the first thing the Germans set up and would certainly be the last to be liquidated.

In the morning we had more news from the worker: Janow which lies about 20 kilometers from us is supposed to have been occupied by the Russians. But for me even more important was the news that all the shops in town were closed. If I could not verify the first report, the second item I knew was correct. This was proof that there was no longer any functioning government in the town.

At night we could also see many changes: All week long a searchlight had split the eastern night sky with its beam; now it had disappeared. Also traffic on the nearby roads, which had been constant recently, was quiet. But we still were afraid to risk going into town and our Christian rescuers did not allow it in any case. We sit in the hideouts waiting tensely for the knock and the word: "Come out! You are free!" But it is still hard to believe that this can ever happen.

The Germans who are so efficient in the area of destruction and annihilation, were not idle during their last days in town. All day long we heard explosions which filled the air and even shook our hideouts. At first we thought that help had finally come and that the town was being barraged by Soviet artillery, but when we came out of our graves at night we saw that this was not so. The burning red sky singed our faces. There were flames all over. We understood that this was not the work of Soviet artillery, but rather betrayed the hand of Hitler's destroyers.

The garden was illuminated by the flames and was as bright as day. Mighty columns of fire raged high where not long ago the German steel eagles⁰ had roared incessantly. The air base in Wolya was on fire, which stretched for kilometers⁰. Constant deafening explosions and new towers of fires and clouds of smoke were sent leaping into the air. This is how it went day and night. Not only military targets fell victim to the fire, but ordinary buildings, too, were destroyed and turned to charcoal.

⁰ Translator's Note: The reference here is to German aircraft.

⁰ Translation ???

Monday, July 24. The whole region was deathly silent. Not a sound could be heard in the bunker, no movement in the garden; the bunker shook from time to time whenever there was an explosion. For a whole day no one came to our hideout. At night when we went outside into the fresh air, we could see new traces of German vandalism. In all directions fires and thick clouds of smoke raged toward the sky. Both electric power stations were aflame, as well as the slaughterhouse, etc.

A quiet, warm July evening filled the garden as we walked a little nervously. We still don't know what is going on, but it is clear that we are standing on the verge of something important. It is possible that this will be our last night stroll in the garden.

The next morning, when nobody had turned up at our bunker, and we heard no human movement around the garden, we understood that if people were not around, it was a good sign that the decisive moment was coming.

We were outside in the garden very early that evening. We noticed movement in the trenches near the garden and now heard an artillery duel. New fires broke out from the artillery fight.

If they were using the trenches now, we inferred, then this was proof that the battlefield was located near us. I called out: Friends! It is quite possible that this time tomorrow morning we will be saved." In the meantime night fell as shrapnel flew over our garden. The Russians were testing the brown beats' nests, which made no rejoinder.

We resigned ourselves to spending the evening cooking dinner. We made preparations for staying longer in the hideouts in case we would not be able to go out due to the proximity of the front. The artillery cannonade over the garden increased by the minute. We crawled back down into the bunkers and tried for a change to sleep at night like real people... .

When we awoke, the day greeted us through the tiny window in the grave. All around there was a nerve wracking silence, which was broken occasionally by the crash of shrapnel.

Suddenly, there were steps by the grave. Our hearts almost stopped: Who could possibly be walking near us at this time? But there was the familiar knock, but bolder than usual. Before I could decide to open the door of the grave, I heard our worker shout: "Come out! You are free!"

I stood there frozen. Free? Could this really be true? Can I go back to being a human being again and move freely about? Is it true and can we believe that the brown murderers have actually been chased out of our town?

Instead of celebrating the fact that we had survived to see the liberation, we fell into a somber mood. We remembered that we were all alone with nowhere to go. Sorrow filled our hearts as we thought: "How complete this miracle would have been, if they, our loved ones, could have been beckoned to awake from their graves!" The shapes of our loved ones pass before our eyes. We remember how Jews had so wanted to witness this moment.

We crawled out of the bunkers and started walking freely about the garden. Our christians told us that the Red Army arrived in town during the night and that the Germans had caused tremendous devastation in the town during their retreat. Our christians advised us to remain here until the situation in town had gotten back to normal somewhat.

We stood and chatted. Our christians were terrifically happy about having survived to this moment of our liberation. During our chatting we had not at all noticed that a Red Army soldier had entered the garden, had unhitched the christian's horse from their wagon, and ridden off on it. When we realized what was going on we started running after him shouting for him to bring back the horse, but it was too late. We felt responsible for this. The christians had driven over to us to bring us the good tidings that we were free and on account of us had suffered a loss--their horse had been commandeered.

It was only in the evening when our christians' servant had taken back the horse that the mood improved again.

In the meantime, Red Army soldiers showed up in the garden pointing their automatic weapons at us. In our broken Russian we tried to make them understand who we were and proudly presented ourselves to them, saying "mui yevrey" over and over again. The Soviet soldiers told us that we could go comfortably into town now and no one would bother us.

We told them that we wanted to get washed, cleaned up and then go into town. During all of this, we stood there and asked ourselves: Can we really walk into town? Oh, how thankful we are to you our liberators!

I washed myself well all over, put on clean underwear, dusted my clothes off and looked off to the town from which I had been exiled 22 months ago and which I would see tomorrow again.

My friends went back down again into the bunkers for the last time to get some sleep, but I stayed in the garden. The whole night long I walked through the garden alone saying goodbye to every corner that become so precious to me over time.

Thursday, July 27. We roamed around the garden decked out in our holiday clothes, admiring in wonder how beautiful the world was this summer's day. We

waited for word from our christian family to set off for town, but they were not in such a hurry and we paced nervously, wanting to be in town already.

Some Red Army soldiers arrived and ordered us out of the garden, since the front lines were located not far from here and we should not risk staying here. "Go into town and live it up!" they said, "everything is alright there now."

We picked up our packs and made our way into town. I looked back for the last time and said farewell to the garden and my grave. I whispered silently: "Oh Grave! Precious grave, we will not say goodbye, for I am just going to take a look at the filthy, bloody world. How long will all my suffering last? I will return to you, next time forever...."

Biala, end of July, 1944.

[HERE INSERT PHOTOGRAPH OF TREBLINKA SIGN WITH THE FOLLOWING CAPTION:

"Town limit sign in the village of Treblinka.
(Archives of the Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland)"

CHAPTER NINE

TREBLINKA FROM UP CLOSE

When I was lying in the grave, my greatest desire was, if I were ever able too look again at world in the light of day, to go to Treblinka, to the graveyard of Polish Jewry. I wanted to go there where the bones of my darling wife were lying; the remains of my family.

The cannons were still thundering, blood was still flowing in torrents, but I was now free from my life in the grave. The memory of my loved ones bore into my brain. I intend to go to them in Treblinka to pay my respect to their dust.

I travelled on an open flatcar in the company of Soviet troops who sang touching melodies about their great Fatherland. Above us stretched a cloud-filled, autumn sky. Dreamy fields moved passed on both sides of the railroad tracks.

Along the road, peasants were moving in holiday clothing, carrying flowers. They were hurrying to their relatives graves, because the catholics are celebrating today, November 2, the memorial day for their departed. The graves were adorned with wreathes and flowers.

I, too, hurry to the grave of my never-to-be-forgotten, to the graves of my loved ones and relatives, but I am holding no flowers in my hand, because I know in advance that I will not find any grave there.

Bloody images of the recent past float before my eyes. This must have been the route, my darling, on which you went to your grave. You looked here for the last time from the slammed shut freight car.

The murderers' hands put an end to your dreams. You can no longer rejoice in freedom!

Yes, I am alive; but my hopes and dreams have been drowned in blood. I go now to look for your dust that was scattered over these fields.

It is autumn. The last leaves are falling and my last remaining hopes have been extinguished. I stare out at the passing fields and forests all of which are filled with unmarked Jewish graves of the passengers to Treblinka who had jumped the trains.

I remember my father who had jumped from the speeding train on the way to the death factory and whom I never saw again. Perhaps, my dear father is resting for all eternity even here by the edge of the woods...or maybe he is right here in this field? "Earth, why do you stay silent? Show me my father's grave and let me shed a little tear on your cold soil... ."

I hear a Polish officer talking about how he survived the war. He had been in Soviet Russia for five years when he was mobilized into the Polish army, with which he came back to the country. He had gotten leave and had gone home. When he got there he looked into the room and saw that no one recognized him. He then asked if he could have a place to spend the night. When they answered that there was no room, he shouted in a rage that he was going to sleep there anyhow. Surprised by his determination, the residents looked him over carefully. Suddenly, his mother shouted: "Conrad! My son! "

I listen to his story and think: "Is it possible that there could there ever be a surprise like this in my life?"

The train rolls on its way and then stops at a small station. I hear someone shout: "Treblinka!"

I climb out of the car. In the dark of the night I cannot see anything that is going on around me at all. I walk up to a cottage and ask permission to stay the night. The peasant family welcomes me rather warmly.

I chat with the peasant about the death factory late into the night. He knows no details about the camp, because no one had dared to get close to the factory itself. At the station he had seen trains packed full with Jews who used to moan frightfully and beg for a drink of water. But no one gave them anything, since for showing such a kindness one could get a bullet in the head. The weeping and pleas for help of the people locked in the freight cars was so heart-rending that one had to run far away from the place so as not to hear it....But the echoes pursued you far and wide and gave you no respite.

I heard about the savage orgies which they carried on with the Jews before they snuffed out their lives. They would cut off people's limbs and stuff them in the victim's hand to hold.

He told me about the riches which the Jews had brought with them to Treblinka and which were stolen from them by the S.S. men and the Ukrainians, who used the gold and jewels to pay for brandy in the villages.

After a while the grizzly stories ceased. I listened to the healthy snoring of the sleeping peasant, but I could not fall asleep myself. Images of that horrifying, tragic period came alive again for me. The autumn wind tore through the peasant cottage.

In its sorrowful howling, it seemed as if I could hear the cries of those who had suffered so here in Treblinka.

The grayness of the autumn morning began intruding into the little cottage. I jumped out of bed and headed off to the place where my loved ones were resting and where I too should have been transformed into dust.

I got some information from the train official, Zombeczki, about how to get into the camp and also directions on how to get in touch with a christian named Krim who lived near the gravel pits and had plenty of information since he had been living there now for twenty years and was there during the German occupation.

I made my way into the camp along the rail line which lead to the gravel pits and on which the freight cars had once travelled packed full of Jews bound for the death factory.

After walking for about three kilometers, I arrived at a forest at the entrance to which there were Russian military posts. I was forced to leave the railroad tracks and take a detour to get to the gravel pits.

Soon I managed to find the christian Krim who related to me the following:

Soon after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war in 1941, several S.S. men came up here with laborers. In the area of the village of Wulka Okroglik they started building barracks. A rumor spread among the local population that they were going to locate an ammunition dump here. The area was enclosed by a barbed wire fence which was camouflaged with a thick covering of branches. Because of this you could not see anything that was going on inside.

Later on they brought several excavation machines which carved deep, giant ravines in the earth.

All of this they learned from the workers.

In the beginning of the summer of 1942 they started bringing train loads of Jews to the station and from there some 20 freight cars were taken into the camp. They had heard the screaming and lament. Later they learned that the people had been murdered.

So the trains loaded with Jews continued to run without pause--Jews who would never see the light of day again--until about the end of August 1943.

After the revolt of the Jewish workers in the camp in the summer of 1943, several more transports of Jews from Bialystok were brought at which time the camp ceased operating.

The process of departing this world must have lasted all of a half hour, since the mournful weeping could be heard for about this length of time.⁰

At first they threw the dead bodies into the deep pits and covered them over with a layer of dirt. Later they started burning the dead and even dug up the earlier corpses and ignited them. The whole region was constantly engulfed in flames. The wind frequently used to carry the horrible stench of decaying human bodies which laid waiting for the flames to consume them.

What exactly took place behind the thickly camouflaged barbed wire fence is difficult to know clearly since no one ever risked going near the cursed spot.

When the transports of Jews stopped coming, an S.S. man together with a Ukrainian occupied the bloodied earth and started farming. Several days before the arrival of the Red Army they burned everything and themselves fled.

After the Red Army invaded, a Russian commission came up here and conducted various investigations. The christian went on:

The workers here were engaged in field work in the gravel pits, in workshops and in other tasks. The work everywhere was arduous, the regime tyrannical and the food pitiful. The Jewish workers had to undergo special torment. When a Jewish worker became just a little weak, they would take him into the nearby forest, order him to dig a grave and shoot him to death.

A few days before the area was captured by the Red Army, the Germans took the workers (including what must have been several hundred Jews) out of the work camps into the forest. They were ordered to dig pits after which they were shot dead. The shooting lasted several hours.

When the pits had been filled with bloody corpses, they rounded up peasants from the nearby villages and forced them to fill in the pits.

Here, in the work camp, the Russian commission started digging up the pits and made a photographic record. Personal documents were found on some of the victims.

About a week ago they transferred a dead body from there to Bielsk Podlaski.⁰

I asked the christian to show me where the death camp was located.

⁰ See Footnote 3, page 228 for a description of the Treblinka death camp by a former S.S. guard stationed there during the war.

⁰ Translator's Note: A town located due north of Biala Podlaska on the highway to Bialystok.

The two of us marched along the railroad tracks back from the gravel pits. We came to a field in which christians were standing digging deep holes. There were women and children searching the freshly excavated earth with their hands.. The christian told me that they were looking for Jewish gold.

This field that had soaked with Jewish blood, where the soil was mixed with the ashes of our loved ones, was now torn apart, as if wild pigs had celebrated an orgy here.

The christian explained to me that it was in this field that the giant pits were located which were filled in the beginning with dead Jewish bodies. There, among the trees, where the barbed wire fence was still standing and where the Russian soldiers were now encamped was the site of the actual death factory.

The christian had nothing more to tell me and said goodbye.

I started pacing over the field where so many traces of the millions of slaughtered Jews still remained. With every step you tread on things that once belonged to the Jewish victims.

Here are two prayer shawls (talesim), arm bands with the Jewish star which every Jew had to wear in those dark days. The wind tossed pages of Sefer Eben Ezra⁰ from one place to another. Pieces of clothing, kitchen utensils, water bottles and vessels were lying around everywhere.

I approached the barbed wire enclosure. I stopped frozen; my eyes filled with tears could not see anything. Here within the barbed wire fence where our loved ones had spent the last minutes of their lives in such unimaginable pain and suffering, you could see just a few traces of Jewish artifacts lying around on the ground. Imitating the pollacks, some Russian soldiers were also digging for Jewish gold.

I stood there and asked myself--"Am I really in Treblinka, the place that had filled each one of us with dread, that had etched such a bloody place in our hearts? Yes, here I am, an unfulfilled candidate for the Treblinka death factory, walking now over the bloody soil where each grain of dust is like the dust of our loved ones.

Here I am walking on a field soaked in Jewish blood. I wanted to scream: "Where are you my darling, where is the piece of earth that holds your bones, that I can stop next to, nestle in my arms, kiss and wet with a warm, sorrow-filled tear?"

The wind howls and blows the soil as if to say: "Get away from here. What do you want to find here? Earth and blood are mixed together and I will scatter this bloody dust all over the world."

⁰ Translator's Note: Eben Ezra was the name of a famous biblical commentator (Avraham ben Meir) who lived in Spain during the 12th century.

So I stand by the edge of the forest, where the trees sway noisily. It seems that the branches are full of the sadness and gloom they embraced during those bloody days. These were the trees on which our loved last gazed. These trees heard the mournful lament of our tormented ones. Perhaps the sad rustling of the trees is an echo of that pitiable roar?

You stand and stare at a field that is maybe the size of a square kilometer and you ask yourself: "How is it possible that a million people could be hidden in this soil? How could so many people be silenced for ever among these trees?"

It was still light in the west. The twilight stretched over the mass grave next to which to which I am standing, a victim that never was.

I ask: "Maybe I am now standing on the very spot where you, my beloved, were hurled into your eternal sleep?" My lips whispered involuntarily: "My precious one, awake, come with me and let's build a new life together. The murderers are gone now."

The light in the west was extinguished in its purple redness. Slowly I bid farewell to the grave of Polish Jewry.

I cast my last parting glance upon the bloody field and wanted to scream:

"Get up, all of you tortured and humiliated ones! Take your smashed skulls, your shredded lungs, your lacerated corpses and shattered children and march silently through the streets of the world's cities. Let the conquered, murdering peoples know what the punishment will be for their deeds.

"And let the joy in the lands of the victors also be silenced. Let a chill pass through their bodies and let them embrace each other in disgust...."

Biala, November, 1944.

EPILOGUE

So, dear friend, you now have a few examples of German "resettlement." I have only extracted a few links from the bloody chain and I would guess that is enough for you.

I can hear you ask already, my friend, so far from the place where it all happened: "How was this possible?"

But I also see the screwed up face of a martyr who made it through the bloody struggle, as he whispers: "Your story was too anemic, too toned down."

And it is true, how benign would a picture of an S.S. man in Treblinka be depicting his taking a crying child from its mother's arms, putting it down on the ground, putting his foot on the child and cutting off its little head with a spade all before the mother's eyes. Or what about the picture of a young woman shot to death and split in two by an S.S. man in order to see what her insides look like.

Yet anyone who has gone through the inhuman suffering and still remain alive, will he not ask how such a thing was possible? Their eyes saw how this was possible, yet they, too, will still ask: "Why?"

Wherever you put your foot in Poland you step on Jewish graves. Be it in the forests, be it in isolated fields, --from all over a voice ascends from a Jewish grave that asks, just as we do, who struggle and hope to stay alive, "Why?"

How did we come to be thrown in the dark graves? What harm did we Polish Jews ever cause the German people? Were we not decried as Germanophiles in our own country?

Speak, answer, tell us why you cut us off from the world before our time and laid waste to our homes?

Despite the will of the German murderers, a handful of us will remain to tell future generations how mankind in the twentieth century exceeded the most savage beast insofar as murder and killing are concerned.

And how painful will the situation of the handful of survivors be? They will emerge from the bloodbath like newborns, they will not have the smallest possession, not even the tiniest memento of those they loved. They will not even know where their loved ones are buried. And how old and bent they will be from the burden of such cruel suffering.

And if you, my friend, were fortunate enough to have been far away from the bloody flood, sit in the company of your family and your country is filled with joy, looking at your children, remember that many of the survivors of the flood now sit alone and homeless.

Who is responsible for the annihilation of millions of Jews?

There will be pacifists perhaps in Jewish circles who will say that the guilt falls on the head of the Hitlerites while the German people is innocent.

But we, the remnant of the destruction of Polish Jewry, who observed everything with a watchful eye, we will say: "The entire German people is guilty. Because a

people which produced so many murderers, so many sadistic torturers, is through and through a nation of murderers."

All of these murders cannot have been kept secret from the German people, when women and children were shot to death in front of everyone. The thousands of German soldiers who go home on leave must certainly report about the scenes they have witnessed.

Where is the voice of the German intelligentsia? Where is the German who says, "I can keep silent no longer"? Where is the German who says, "I accuse"? Where is the German working class?

They sit back calmly, they enjoy the Hitlerite plunder and spoils and look on while millions of defenseless people drown in rivers of blood. They remain quiet with the intention that, if they ever are called to account, it will be the heads of the Nazi clique that will roll.

The Wehrmacht also is taking an active role in the extermination actions. How is it that thousands of German officers have the courage to die for their Fatherland and not one of them can muster the courage to die for humanity? Why hasn't a single officer with his detachment of soldiers shown the courage to prevent innocent blood from being spilled?

And German women? Don't they see the sufferings of Jewish women and children? Where is their maternal heart? Aren't they also taking a direct part in the suffering of Jewish women in the various camps?

On the contrary, is there any stratum of the German people that is not free from guilt for the bloody annihilation of the Jewish people?

And after everything, my friend, can you put your hand on your heart and say that Germany alone is responsible for our holocaust? Have not the so-called Great Powers also played a major role? And did not the populations of many occupied countries participate directly in our annihilation?

The conquered will one day get their punishment, but the victors will not be judged and will most certainly never be punished. For them there will only be the judgment of history.

When our last hour will strike in the vale of tears, when our eyes will close tight in eternal sleep, our lips will yet whisper, as did those of our loved ones there in the death camps, a curse on the bloody world of the 20th century--the whole world and its bloody rulers!

Biala, September, 1943. Written in a hideout in a garden outside of town.

APPENDICES

CHRONOLOGY1939

- 1 September Biala is bombed twice by German aircraft.
In Wolya (suburb) the first Jewish victims fall during the bombing.
- 26 September Red Army invades Biala.
- 9 October German Army invades Mezritch.
- 10 October Red Army leaves Biala; the Germans invade.
- November The Gestapo extorts monetary tribute from the
Jews of Biala and Mezritch.
- 24 November Biala Jews ordered to wear the Yellow Star of David on their
left breast. Shortly thereafter a white arm band with a blue Star of David is
substituted. Biala Jews are forbidden to leave the town.
- Year end Jews from Suwalk and Serock are brought to Biala.
Jews from Gaszelsk, Ripin and Suwalk are brought to Mezritch. Some Radzyn Jews
are deported.

1940

- Beginning of Year Jewish prisoners of war from the former Polish Army are
brought to Biala. Jews slaughtered in Slawiticz.
- March Jews in Biala and Radzyn Districts ordered to register for
forced labor.
- June Almost all able-bodied Jewish men in Mezritch are
transferred to labor camps.
- July Large round-up in Biala and Mezritch; Jewish men
transferred to Belzec for work.

October
to Mezritch. More Jews from Cracow and vicinity are brought

1941

Beginning of Year Jewish elderly and unemployed from Biala are transported to Opole (a village near Rososz).

Purim Eve, 5701 Jews from Mlawa are brought to Mezritch and Lomaz.

Pesakh Eve, 5701 More Jews from the Cracow area brought to Mezritch.

September 1 Biala Jews forbidden to use taxis.

September 25 Announcement in Biala of prohibition against Jews to leave their place of residence and make use of public and private means of transportation.

September 25 Prohibition against christians in the Biala District allowing a Jew to spend the night, providing a Jews with food or helping him travel.

November Dozens of Jews arrested in Mezritch by the Radzyn Gestapo.

Jews found on Biala and Mezritch Boulevards are killed.

End of Year Jews in Biala and Mezritch ordered to turn in their furs.

1942

January Jews slaughtered in Mezritch by the Lublin S.S.

Jews from the villages of Dolhobroda, Holeszow and Anna are driven into the ghetto at Slawaticz.

Jews from the villages of Rozwadowka, Motwica an Czepotka are deported to Wisznic.

March 2 Biala Jews are forbidden to work or in or visit Aryan food stores and factories.

- March A transport of Jews from Mielec is brought to Mezritsch.
- After Pesakh, 5702 Jews massacred in Mezritsch
- Dozens of Jews executed in Biala.
- Radzyn Gestapo orders Mezritsch Jewish Council to deliver 8 - 9 kilograms of gold.
- May Slovakian Jews brought to Mezritsch.
- June Second execution of dozens of Jews in Biala.
- June 10 - 11 First Resettlement Action in Biala.
- August 4 Mass roundup of Jewish men in Biala.
- August 10 Biala Jews forbidden to leave their assigned residential area.
- Christians in Biala District prohibited from having any contact with Jews.
- August 12 Roundup of Jewish men in Biala.
- 400 Jewish men from Biala are transported to Lublin, including the Jewish Council, Welfare Committee, Sanitation Brigade and Jewish Police.
- August 17 All Jews of Lomaz are executed en masse.
- August 19 Resettlement in Parcew.
- August 21 Resettlement in Minsk-Mazowieck
- August 22 Resettlement in Siedlice and Lozic.
- August 25 First Resettlement in Mezritsch
- September 19 Biala S.D. orders Jewish Council to collect gold from the Jews.
- Order requiring Jews to leave the towns of Janow and Konstantin.
- September 26 Second and last resettlement in Biala.
- Biala District is Judenrein.

September	Second resettlement in Parcewe.
October 5	First resettlement in Lukow.
October 6 Treblinka.	Jewish workers in Biala labor camps deported to
Second resettlement in Mezritsch begins.	
October 14	Resettlement in Radzyn begins.
October 27	Third Resettlement in Mezritsch begins.
October	Parcew is Judenrein.
November 7	Fourth Resettlement in Mezritsch begins.
November	Jewish workers from the Biala labor camps are concentrated in one location.
Autumn there.	Resettlement in Adamow and revolt of the Jews
December 15	40 Jewish workers at the Biala Wehrmacht labor camp are shot.
December 17 labor camp.	Execution of Jewish workers from the Biala Wehrmacht
End of December	Jewish workers from Mezritsch taken to Trawniki.
<u>1943</u>	
January 1	Massacre in the Mezritsch ghetto.
February	10 Jewish policemen executed in Mezritsch.
May 2	Fifth resettlement action begins in Mezritsch.
Resettlement in Lukow.	
May 26	Sixth resettlement in Mezritsch
July 17	Jews massacred in Mezritsch.

July 18

Mezritch is Judenrein.

1944

July 26

Biala and Mezritch liberated by the Red Army.

TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS

Document 1

Official Gazette
of the General Governor
for the Occupied Polish Territories

Part I

1940Published in Cracow, February 6, 1940No. 10

1/26/40 Decree on the Use of Railway by Jews in the
General GovernmentPage 45

Decree
on the use of Railways by Jews in the Generalgovernment

January 26, 1940

Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 1 of the Edict of the Führer and Reichchancellor concerning the Administration of the Occupied Polish Territories dated October 12, 1939 (Reich Legal Gazette I, Page 2077), I decree:

Section 1

- (1) The use of railroads by Jews is henceforth prohibited.
- (2) This shall not apply to trips which have been authorized by Generalgovernor, his office or one of his District Chiefs.

Section 2

- (1) Violations will be punished by imprisonment and with fines of unlimited amount or by more severe punishments.
- (2) The Special Court (Sondergericht) is authorized to pass final judgments under this regulation.

Section 3

This decree shall take effect on the day after its publication.

Cracow, January 26, 1940

The Generalgovernor for the Occupied Polish Territories

Frank

Document 2

REGULATION

Concerning the Limitation of Residence for Jews
in the Territory of the Lublin District
February 12, 1941

Pursuant to Sections 1 and 2 of the Decree concerning Residential Restrictions in the Generalgovernment of September 13, 1940 (Official Gazette for the Generalgovernment, Part I, Page 288, I order for the territory of the Lublin District:

Section 1. All Jews located in the territory of the Lublin District are temporarily forbidden from leaving their place of residence even provisionally.

Place of residence shall mean the town or village, in which the Jew maintains his residence or continuously sojourns or failing same, the place where he last sojourned.

The restrictions of Section 1 shall not apply in cases of public interest or individual emergency, such as in cases where Jews in the course of their employment obligation or exclusively in carrying out their permitted activity as procuring agents negotiate or conduct their business beyond the boundaries of their place of residence, in the latter case the Jew in question must have in his possession a valid permit from the internal administration department of the Chief of the Lublin District.

Section 2. Exemptions from Section 1 may be granted upon petition to the authorized District Captain in the Territory of the Free City of Lublin of the Mayor of Lublin.

Section 3. Violations of the regulation will be punished by imprisonment of up to 3 months and a fine of up to 1000 zlotys or both.

Assignment to a labor camp may be ordered as well.

The Kreishauptleute for the District of Lublin and with respect to the City of Lublin, the Mayor of Lublin, are authorized to administer punishment hereunder and order assignment to a labor camp.

Section 4. This regulation shall take effect immediately.

Chief of the Lublin District
Zoerner
Governor

Document 3.

Official Gazette of the Governor of the Lublin District

April 30, 1942

Number 4. Year 1942

DECREEConcerning the Restriction of Place of Residence in the Territory of the City of
Lublin--April 16, 1942

I hereby rescind my decrees regarding the restriction of place of residence within the limits of the City of Lublin dated December 9, 1942 and February 4, 1942. The prior decrees were promulgated for the purpose of successfully combatting typhus and other infectious diseases pursuant to Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Decree concerning the restriction of places of residence in the Generalgovernment dated September 13, 1940 (Official Gazette of the Generalgovernment, Part I, Page 288), I hereby modify same for the City of Lublin as follows:

1. Jews shall be assigned the fenced off area in the suburb of Majdan Matarski as a residential zone (ghetto) in accordance with Paragraph 4 of the Third Decree concerning the fencing in of residential areas in the Generalgovernment of October 15, 1941 (Official Gazette of the Generalgovernment). Only those Jews shall be permitted to live in the said residential zones, who possess yellow identification papers stamped with a black "J" [Author: "Jew"] and a Jewish Star [author: star of david] and issued by the Commander of the Security Police and S.D. for the City of Lublin. Entry into the Jewish residential zone is permitted only through the designated gates.
2. Jews who reside in the Jewish residential zone can remain in the territory of the City of Lublin so long as they possess yellow identifications papers, issued by the Commander of the Security Police and S.D. for Lublin District (see Section 1), authorizing them to enter the territory of the City of Lublin.
3. With respect to Jews located in sealed labor camps, said labor camps shall be deemed to their actual place of residence in accordance with Paragraph 1. Jews may leave the labor camp only with a written certificate of the camp director. In closed worker groups, it is sufficient if the group director issues a corresponding certificate. Any such certificates shall not authorize the holder to violate the Residence Zones delimited above in Paragraph 1.

4. For Jews who are stranded in another residential zone, the buildings in which they are presently located shall be deemed their residential zone for purposes of Paragraph 1. They may leave this zone only if they shall possess identification papers, issued by the Commander, Security Police and Security Service, Lublin District (See Paragraph 1), which authorize them to reside within the municipal limits of the City of Lublin.

5. Jews who illegally leave their designated residential zones will be punished by death pursuant to the Third Decree concerning Restrictions on Places of Residence in the General Government, dated May 15, 1941 (Official Gazette of the General Government, Page 595). Persons who knowingly maintain such Jews shall be subject to the same penalty. Violators will be tried by the a Special Court (Sondergericht).

6. Only the following persons are allowed to enter Jewish residential zones:

- a. Jews who live in that residential zone, or
- b. Persons who enter on official business

Persons violating the foregoing restrictions (instituted for purposes of combatting contagious diseases) will be punished with imprisonment in accordance with Paragraph 327 of the German Penal Code.

7. In order to prevent the spread of contagious diseases, I hereby close the present Jewish residential zones to public transport, subject to rescission. Residence or sojourn in the residential zones is permitted only for persons who possess homes in the particular zone, assigned by the Housing Office of the Municipal Administration, or for persons who reside therein on official business. Persons violating this restriction shall also be punished in accordance with Paragraph 327 of the German Penal Code.

8. All other identification papers not covered by this decree which authorize Jews to live in or leave the territory of the City of Lublin or any quarter thereof in order to use taxis or cabs or to sojourn after the prohibited time ("curfew"--author), will be renewed on April 20, 1942.

9. This decree shall take effect on April 20, 1942.

Lublin, April 16, 1942. Zoerner, Governor

Document 4.

Transcription

O R D E R

Pursuant to the Decree concerning Residential Restrictions in the Generalgovernment, dated September 13, 1940 (VBIGG I, Pg. 288), as amended, I hereby order to take effect immediately:

All Jews residing the Town of Biala Podlaska shall:

1. Not leave that section of the city assigned them as a residential zone;
2. Set foot on Grabanowska Street and Prosta Street only on that side of the street located inside the Jewish residential zone and on Janow Street only on the path bordering the Jewish residential zone (the right footpath looking from the Town Square);
3. Not set foot upon Janow Street itself nor enter upon any other street or square lying outside of the of the designated Jewish residential zone;
4. Use the route via Prosta and Narutowicz Streets to and from the Jewish bathhouse and delousing center only in closed groups lead by the Jewish Police.

The use by Jews of public streets on which their place of work is located or which lie on the route to or from their work place is exempted from the foregoing prohibition. Such Jews must carry with them as identification papers, their work card from the Labor Office or an exemption certificate with a photograph taken by the Passport Office of the District Administration (Kreishauptmannschaft).

The foregoing order applies correspondingly to the Jews legally residing in other communities within Biala Podlaska County.

Aryans, who are not on official or police business, are forbidden to enter the Jewish residential zone or individual residences or otherwise to deal in any manner with Jews, in the Town or any of the communities of Biala-Podlaska County.

Violations of this Order will be punished in accordance with existing regulations.

Biala-Podlaska August 10, 1942

Acting District Commissioner, Kühl

Document 5.

[Transcription]

Biala Podlaska, September 24, 1942

Telephonogram issued by the District Commissioner,
Mr. Czajkowska, today, 9/26/42 at 9:00 a.m.:

To the Mayor of Biala-Podlaska

All Jews in Biala County must be expelled.

Mezritch has been designated as the Place of Residence for Biala County.

The resettlement of the Jews will take place on Saturday, September 26, 1942 in closed groups.

Jews living outside of Biala have until September 29 of this year to go on foot to Mezritch via the Terespol -- Mezritch highway.

Any Jew found in Biala County after September 29, 1942 will subject to the most severe punishment.

This decree shall not apply to those Jews who are located in sealed labor camps.

Persons keeping Jews irrespective of age or who knowingly keep Jews outside of their place of residence may expect severe penalties.

The elders of the Jewish community together with the Polish and Ukrainian Police are personally responsible for seeing that any plundering of Jewish property will not occur.

Plundering shall be punishable by death.

District Commissioner
Kühl

I have received the foregoing telephonogram today, September 26, 1942 at 9:00 a.m.

Secretary--{Signature illegible}

Document 6.

[Transcription]

Municipality of Biala Podlaska
Biala Podlaska, September 28, 1942.

Proclamation

Pursuant to the Order of the District Commission of the 24th of this month, I hereby notify the population that entry into the former Jewish Quarter without a special permit is strictly forbidden.

Looting of houses, stores, etc. is punishable by death.

Engineer A. Walawski
Mayor

Document 7.

[Transcription]

Municipality of Biala Podlaska
Town Sanitation Institute

Municipality of Biala Podlaska
September 29, 1942
Journal No. 3942/42

NOTICE

To: The Mayor of the Town of Biala Podlaska

In accordance with the Mayor's decree of September 26 of this year, Journal No. 3996/42, I hereby notify you that none of the workers of the Town Sanitation Institute is of Jewish descent and that none of the Jews has a hiding place on the grounds of any of the Institute's buildings.

At the same time I wish to emphasize that I have issued an order to Jan Grabowski, an employee of the Institute, who lives in an Institute building, that under no circumstances shall he permit any Jew to hide out in the Institute. And if any of such cases occur, he shall turn the Jews directly over to the nearest gendarme post and not let them loose.

Biala Podlaska
September 29, 1942.

Director of the Town Sanitation Institute
W. Iwanicki

Document 8.

[TRANSCRIPTION]

Municipality of Biala Podlaska
Biala Podlaska
7 October 1942

PROCLAMATION

It has been determined that following the resettlement of the Jews from the former Jewish Quarter there have been further cases of looting by local residents. In conjunction with the Security Police, I hereby demand that all perpetrators immediately return all items previously taken in connection with which complete amnesty is guaranteed. Other cases will be subject to the most severe punishment. All items must be turned over to the Biala Podlaska Border Police Commissariat, 17 Drescher Street, on or before October 12, 1942.

Engineer A. Walawski
Mayor

Document 9.

Extract from the Cracow Newspaper of Saturday, October 17, 1942.

The First Jew-Free Town in the Generalgovernment. Favorable Effects on Commerce and Trade.

Lublin, October 17.

Lublin is the first city in the Generalgovernment to be free of Jews and work is now under way to free the individual districts in the area from Jews who have left the economic life of the country in considerable disarray. The first district devoid of Jews is Biala Podlaska. The operation was carried out in the following fashion. District officials designated certain areas as residential zones for Jews from the entire district. For this clean-up, both the districts of Biala Podlaska and Radzyn collectively chose one town to be the Jewish place of residence, namely Mezritch. Since, however, this locality lies in the District of Radzyn, Biala Podlaska has no more Jews.

The effects of removing of the Jews are noteworthy. Black market prices fell immediately by more than half. The Polish population looks favorably upon the measures and is happy that the Jews, who had bled them dry for so many years, have finally disappeared and order in commerce has been restored. Moreover, it has also come to light that there are numerous Polish artisans and tradespeople in a variety of areas. These people had taken up other professions, having been oppressed by the Jews, who had a monopoly in commerce and the trades. Now they are returning to their former jobs. Not only has order been restored to the marketplace, but now the population goes joyfully to work which now benefits them exclusively and is not being exploited by Jewish parasites any longer.

In order to establish economic order in area around Lubatow, the Commissioner of the Lublin District has designated the Ghetto of Lubatow as the Jewish place of residence for Jews from the communities of Tysmieniec, Uscimow, Firlej, Kamionka, Luszawa, Lucka, Samoleski, Tarlo and the city of Ostrow including Niemce.

All Jews from the mentioned communities and the city of Ostrow must leave the communities not later than 24 hours after publication of this District Police Decree and report to the Jewish residential area in the town of Lubatow. Jews still found outside of Lubatow after the expiration of the said period are punishable by death.

The Jewish Council for the town of Lubatow is charged to shelter, take in and, if necessary, to care for the Jews coming to Lubatow from the above-mentioned communities. Every non-Jew who provides refuge to a Jew or hides a Jew will have to answer to the Special Court. Any such activity shall in no way release a Jew from his duty to abide by this Police Decree.

Document 10.

[TRANSCRIPTION]

To:
Municipal Police Regiment 25
in Radzyn

IdL/StOct. 21, 1942

As is clear from the certificate, dated October 15, 1942, of the Warsaw Armaments Command of the Reichminister for Armament and Munitions, a copy of which is attached hereto, the brush industry in Mezritsch is functioning now exclusively to supply the Wehrmacht and is considered to be an enterprise important to the armaments effort.

The enterprise has a 900-man Jewish staff which is comprised of educated craftsmen. The said force of tradesmen is not replaceable at this time. There are no similar enterprises existing in the Generalgouvernement. The training of Polish replacements is being vigorously pursued. Nevertheless, this will not be completed for a period of time estimated at 1 to 2 years.

In order to meet the requirements of the Wehrmacht it is currently necessary to retain the available Jewish craftsmen. Since Mezritsch serves as an assembly point for previous Jewish resettlements, there is a danger already encountered by the brush factory, that the further continuation of the brush industry appears to be in jeopardy.

For these reasons measures are suggested.

With reference to the advice given me by Oberleutnant Gnade, Company commander in Mezritsch, permit me to request that in the event of renewed Jewish resettlement, you protect the brush industry and to so inform the local Municipal Police. The individual work places are scattered and are located at:

1. Workshop I Lubelska 104
2. Workshop II Lubelska 90
3. Workshop III Lubelska 51
4. Workshop IV Piekarska 13
5. Workshop V Nadbrzezna 19
6. Workshop VI Staromiejska 36
7. Brush factory Lubelska 76

Heil Hitler!

Document 11.

[TRANSCRIPTION]

To the Mayor of Mezritch:

IdL/StOct. 21, 1942

As is clear from the certificate, dated October 15, 1942, of the Warsaw Armaments Command of the Reichminister for Armament and Munitions, a copy of which is attached hereto, the brush industry in Mezritch is functioning now exclusively to supply the Wehrmacht and is considered to be an enterprise important to the armaments effort.

The enterprise has a 900-man Jewish staff which is comprised of educated craftsmen. The said force of tradesmen is not replaceable at this time. There are no similar enterprises existing in the Generalgouvernement. The training of Polish replacements is being vigorously pursued. Nevertheless, this will not be completed for a period of time estimated at 1 to 2 years.

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For these reasons measures are suggested.

With reference to the advice given me by Oberleutnant Gnade, Company commander in Mezritch, permit me to request that in the event of renewed Jewish resettlement, you protect the brush industry and to so inform the local Municipal Police. The individual work places are scattered and are located at:

1. Workshop I Lubelska 104
2. Workshop II Lubelska 90
3. Workshop III Lubelska 51
4. Workshop IV Piekarska 13
5. Workshop V Nadbrzezna 19
6. Workshop VI Staromiejska 36
7. Brush factory Lubelska 76

Heil Hitler!

[Handwritten on the original:]

The application is recommended.

Governor of the Lublin District

Economic Department and Department of

Trustee Administration
 Dr. Thieme- Lublin, Oct. 10, 1942.
Document 12.

[TRANSCRIPTION]

Trustee for the Brush Industry in
 Mezritch

To the Governor of the Lublin District
 Forestry Department

Lublin IdL/Gi Nov. 24, 1942

Re: Allocation of Fuel Wood.

As is clear from the attached certificate of the Warsaw Armaments Command, the local brush industry is one of the enterprises working to support the war economic effort and as such should be allowed to continue without interference as much as possible. For these reasons, allow me to present for your consideration the following:

All enterprises supporting the brush industry require on the average

150 cbm of wood fuel per month.

Since I was advised by the Forestry Department that rationing of wood is very restricted, I have endeavored to obtain the needed fuel without petitioning the aforesaid Department. To this end, since the beginning of the year I have been clearing tree stumps and have formed a special work colony for this purpose consisting of 150 laborers. The result was extremely pleasing from the beginning and I thought it would be possible not only to meet the continuing needs from wood clearing, but also to be able to establish reserves. Unfortunately, subsequent difficulties arose (loss of manpower in the wake of Jewish resettlement actions and in connection therewith the loss of equipment, which had to be completely replenished) which slowed down the tempo of the forest work considerably. Despite these difficulties, through mid-October 576 cbm of wood fuel was made available to the brush industry which made it possible to completely cover the current production requirements. However, on account of the circumstances described above, reserves were not established.

In the mid-October, the forest work had to be terminated, however, since the labor colony was resettled during the renewed Jewish action and the local authorities have refused me permission to engage Jewish workers outside the town. Moreover, all tools were stolen during the last action and new ones could not be obtained. The question of supplying fuel thus has reappeared as pressing as it was before and I

have forced to request a an allocation of wood fuel corresponding to my current needs as describe above.

In the hope that you will take into consideration the importance of the brush industry to the war effort and the urgent nature of the demand, I look forward to a positive decision and say

Heil Hitler!

1 Attachment

Document 13.

[TRANSCRIPTION]

Trustee for the Brush Industry
in Mezritch

To
Creditanstalt--Bankverein
Cracow Branch

Krakau
Adolf Hitler Square 31 Nov. 24, 1942

Re: Settlement of my debt balance

I beg to inform you that I have this day remitted to you the amount of 25,000 zlotys in settlement of my account and kindly request that you make a conforming entry.

In the wake of repeated Jewish actions and the resultant dislocation in the brush industry, I was regrettably not in a position finally to take care of this matter and now beg your forgiveness.

Heil Hitler!

LIST OF SURVIVORS**Biala**

From the records of the Bialer Benevolent Society in America.

Abilovitch, Abraham (Itshke Kowal's grandson)
 Abramovitch, David
 Abramovitch, Haya (From the Tshesler family, behind the Criminal
 Acker, Shlomo (from Yehiel Michel Melamed, Wolya)
 Ackerman, Falik
 Adesman, Mikhel
 Adler, Bayle (Hayyim Havele's daughter-in-law)
 Adler, Gitte (Hayyim Havele's daughter-in-law)
 Adlershtein, David (From Simchele Ketzev's ???)
 Adlershtein, Gnedl (Liptshe, the butcher's daughter; murdered)
 Adlershtein, Hanna (Liptshe, the butcher's daughter)
 Altman, Gittel (Alter Tshesler's grandson)
 Appenstein, Reuven
 Appleboym, Avraham (from Moshe Merke's)
 Appleboym, Devorah (from Peskhya Hoffenheim, Mottele from Shmalz)
 Appleboym, Simha (from Moshe Merke's)
 Appleboym, Yitzhak (grandson of the Mashgiah, Hayyim David)
 Aronovitch, Haya (Granddaughter of Gedaliah Aronovitch--Writer)

Bachrach, Rivka (Hayyim Levi Rubinstein's granddaughter)
 Bargman, Bayle
 Bass, Royze (Itshe Leib Reitz, butcher)
 Bear, Itzik
 Beckerman, Berl (from the Sanya's)
 Beckerman, David (from the Sanya's)
 Beckerman, Haya
 Beckerman, Mordechai
 Beckerman, Moshe
 Beckerman, Sanya
 Beckerman, Yisrael (from the Sanya's)
 Berman, Aharon and wife Dintshe (Benjamin Moshe Tziva's daughter)
 Berman, Leibl (from the Sanya's)
 Biederman, David (from the Shatan's in Kitne)
 Biederman, Genya (from the Shatan's in Kitne)
 Borenkrojt, Haya (Moshe Tuvya's granddaughter)
 Borenkrojt, Yitzhak (Siedlice bakery)

Borenstein, Yaakov (Leibe Mednik's grandson)
 Braverman, Gedaliah (shteper???)
 Braverman, Glicka (Yisroelke Maller's wife) and daughter and her
 Braverman, Rachel (Gedaliah's daughter)
 Braverman, Shlomo (Gedaliah's son)
 Buchalter, Feivel (Yaakov Flichtenreich's son-in-law)
 Butkovitch-Goldberg, Feige

Cahan, Gedaliah (Yitzhakel, Yeshaya Bertche's son)
 Cantor, Yehaya
 Cohen, Sarah (Hershel, Benjamin Moshe Tziva's daughter)
 Cohen, Yaakov
 Czarna, Haya (Benjamin Katev's)
 Czarna, Nadzhiya (from Kola Wieneved's)
 Czerk, Mendel and wife Dientshe (Benjamin Moshe Tziva's
 Czerwononogura, Feivel

Dangal, Bluma (from Aharon Leib Nowomiast, Commissioner Yaakov
 Davidson, Michel
 Dechman, Sara
 Diener, Miriam (from the Wolya)
 Dombrower, Moshe (Shmuel Melamed's grandson)
 Dorfman, Yisroel (from Moshele Hershele Schuster's) and his wife

Eckstein, Moshe
 Edelman, Leib
 Edelman, Shmuel
 Edelman, Wolf
 Eisenberg, Zisl
 Eisenshmidt, Benjamin (From the Moshonzhniks)
 Eisenstadt, Mendel (Mendel Stritt's grandson)
 Eisenstadt, Yitzhak
 Epstein-Richter (Yankel Leibe's)

Feigenbojm, Baruch
 Feigenbojm, Moshe Joseph (Asher Stoler's son)
 Feinbuch, Shlomo
 Feldman, Haya (Moshe Milner's daughter)
 Feldman, Liebe

Feldman, Shmuel (Hiya's son)
 Feldman, Yitzhak (Hiya's son)
 Felzenstein, Hersh (from Lozer Pishtshatzer)
 Figgerik, Yitzhak
 Finkelstein, Ida (from the Kola Wineved's)
 Finkelstein, Leibel (Fishele Gampel's son)
 Finkelstein, Shabtai (from the large garden near Mottel Mintz)
 Flacksman, L.
 Fleischer, Dora (Yidel Schwartz's daughter)
 Framititch, M.
 Friedberg, Yisroel
 Friedberg-Shtecher, Hinde
 Friedman, Hayyim
 Friedman, Wolf
 Friedman, Yaakov (Hayyim Feivel Beznozek's son)
 Friedman, Yitzhak
 Friedman, Zalman
 Frishman, Mottel
 Futterman, Feige (Moshe Booke's daughter-in-law)
 Futterman, Joseph (Moshe Booke's son)

Gelman, Shlomo (from Moshe Michel Melamed)
 Geltman, Haya Sara
 Geltman, Yisroel and his wife Haya (Yoselle Preter's daughter)
 Genshtal, Ruzhka (Shmuel Isaac's daughter)
 Gershkop (from Hershele from the Wolya)
 Gershkop (from Hershele from the Wolya)
 Gershkop, Pintshe (Leizer Pius' daughter)
 Ginsburg, Aharon (Tzomhe's grandson)
 Gliksberg, Nahman
 Gliksberg, Ozer (the rabbi's grandson)
 Gold (Gutman), Bronya (Hanan Tepper's daughter)
 Goldberg, Golda
 Goldberg, Joseph
 Goldberg, M. (nee Rosener)
 Goldberg, Meir
 Goldberg, Miriam
 Goldfarb, Avraham
 Goldfarb, Leon
 Goldfarb, Yisroel
 Goldfeld--Slobodzka Gutshe
 Goldhaar, Reizel

Goldman, Yisroel
 Goldscheft, Meir
 Goldschmidt, Avraham
 Goldschmidt, Bayle
 Goldsheft, Avraham (From Reizelen, from the Pletzelech???)
 Goldshmidt, Yaakov
 Goldstein, Devorah
 Gora
 Gottesdiener, Gershon and Gittle (nee Weissman)
 Gottlieb, Devorah (from the Kave's)
 Greenberg
 Greenberg, Aharon
 Greenberg, Avigdor
 Greenberg, M.
 Greenberg, Moshe
 Greenberg, Noah
 Greenberg, Yona
 Greenblatt, Asher
 Greenfeld, Haya
 Greenshpan, Hayyim
 Greenstein, Haya (from the Schindelmacher's)
 Greenstein, Toyba (Itikel's daughter)
 Gretman, Hannah
 Grobman, Moshe
 Grodner, Rivka
 Gronitzky, Moshe
 Gruchazh, Gittle
 Gutman, Mendel (Melamed Eliyahu David's grandson)
 Gutman, Moshe
 Gutman, Yaakov
 Gwiazda, Shmuel and Mrs. Elka (Avraham Mendel's granddaughter)

Hefter, Moshe
 Herrenfeld, Haya
 Hershberg, Hayyim Shia (Yaakov Velvel's son)
 Hershkop, Yehoshua
 Himmelfarb
 Hoffer, Michas (Pharmacist) and with Sonya and daughter Basha
 Holzhecker

Izikovitch, Leib (Yaakov Zuberger's nephew)

Jarnitzky (from Alter Koval's)
 Jood, David (Benjamin Leib's grandson)
 Judaschreiber, Yaakov (from Hershel Lenchner's)
 Jukel, Mottel (lived at the Koza's) and wife

Kachner, Netti
 Kanalstein, Ch. (Leizer Dina's grandchild)
 Karnetzka, Y. (Zucker, Yoelka Melamed's grandchild)
 Katz, Haya
 Katz, Sarah
 Katz-Rosenzweig, Rivka (Noska's daughter)
 Klang, Marcus
 Kleinman, (Alter Tshesler's grandchild)
 Klink, Meir
 Knizhnik, Hayim Joseph (painter).
 Konar, Sh.
 Koralik, Moshe (from the Kozaklekh)
 Korman, Moshe
 Kulavi, Shmuel (Abbele Maler's grandson)

Lapidus, Ida (David Pizhitze's daughter)
 Laskowsky, Joseph
 Leibzon, Yehiel
 Leine, Gita
 Lemberger, Meir
 Lerner, B. (probably Moshe Milner's)
 Lerner, Shalom
 Lerner, Shlomo (from the Gampel's)
 Levine, Yisroel
 Lieber, Miriam (from Ovadiah Muller)
 Lieberman, B.
 Liebman, Beryl (from Mordechai Tshesler's)
 Liebman, Chaim (Sorele Hanna Merim's son)
 Liebman, Zelig
 Lishak, Kalman
 Liss, Ettel
 Liss, Sanya
 Liverant, Loyza (?)
 Lustigman, Beryl

Makowska, Yadhia (from Aharon Leib Nowomiast, Commissioner)
 Malina, Chayim--Meshel
 Mally, Nahum (from Mattis Reizele's)
 Mandelbojm, Menuha (Zavele Scherer's)
 Mandelman, Meika
 Maneta, Avraham
 Mann, Henya
 Meyerson, Hanina
 Mintz, Simha
 Modlin, Pesakh
 Morgenstern, Aharon
 Morgenstern, Benjamin
 Morgenstern, Nahum
 Morgernstern, Reizel

Naparstek, Moshe
 Naparstek, Reizel
 Napierstek, Shamai
 Neistein, Tovya (from Zavele Scherer's)
 Nevitsky, Shimshon
 Nievidza, Eliyahu
 Nortman, Itshe
 Nortman, Velvel
 Nuchowitch, Avraham (Meir Schneider's son)
 Nuchowitch, Rivka (Meir Schneider's daughter)
 Nulman, Moshe

Orlanska, Golda (Lutwak family)
 Orlanska, Nina (From the Lutwaks)
 Ossenholtz, Berish (compositor)
 Ossenholtz, Feige (Store on Warsaw Street)
 Ozhech, M. Reizel (Fulya and Riva Brodatch's daughter)

Packman, Beryl
 Packman, Leizer (tinsmith)
 Packman, Leon
 Perlmutter, Baruch
 Perlmutter, Moshe

Perlmutter, Reuven
 Peterburg, Yaakov (Itzele Hittelmacher's son)
 Peterman, Moshe and wife Meita Hershberg (Yaakov Velvel's
 Pietrushka, Miriam
 Piskel, Gedaliah
 Piskel, Moshe
 Platt, Groynes (Itshe Loshitzer's son)
 Platt, Yaakov (Itshe Loshitzer's son)
 Platt, Yitzhak (Simha Loshitzer's son)
 Plier, Mannes
 Potshtaruk (probably from Hanna Ettele's) and wife (Yaakov Kave's
 Potshtaruk, David
 Potshtaruk, Nehemiah
 Pozhitchka, Isser
 Preter, Sarah (Yossele Commissioner's daughter)
 Preter, Yitzhak (Yossele Commissioner's son)

Ratman, Zisl
 Rechtman, Michel
 Redlevitch, Gedaliah
 Reichengold, Yaakov
 Reichert, Hayyim (Yaakov Shedlezer's grandson)
 Richter, Ayzik
 Rodzinek, Moshe (Shmerl Zhondar's grandson)
 Rodzinek, Noah (Shmerl Zhondar's grandson)
 Rosenblatt, Elka
 Rosenblatt, Toyba
 Rosenblatt, Yitzhak
 Rosenbojm, Ida
 Rosenbojm, Mottel
 Rosenfeld, Aharon (Simhele Katzev's son) and wife, Bertha (from
 Rosenstein, Hanna
 Rosenstein, Ida
 Rosenstein, Krusa
 Rosenwald, B.
 Rotenberg, Hersh
 Rubenstein, Litman (from Itzele Rabinower)

Sandlarz, Beryl
 Sandlarz, Hanna
 Sandlarz, Hella

Schatz
 Schenkarzm, Hersh
 Schklarsky, Y.
 Schklaver and wife (Avraham Urmacher's daughter)
 Schliterman, Elka (from the Blachazhes ???)
 Schmuckerman, Pinya
 Schneiderman, Joseph and his wife Feige (from the Asenholtz')
 Schneiderman, Moshe (Berele Stoler's son), his wife Scheine
 Schnur, Shaul (Zimele's son, at the Pizhitz's).
 Schreier, Joseph.
 Schuchmacher, Esther
 Schuchmacher, Reizel
 Schuchmacher, S.
 Schuchmacher, Sarah (Gabrielke Gendzele's wife)
 Schuchmacher, Yitzhak
 Schuchmacher, Yudel
 Schuster, Leib
 Schwartzberg, Haya
 Schwartzberg, Shmuel
 Schwartzberg, Shmuel
 Segal, Moshe
 Solsky, Feivel (Grandson of Gittle from the Tsheyne's)
 Solsky, Yoel (from Tshesler Nahum Adzhume's)
 Spirtus, Yaakov
 Spokoyny, Fradel
 Srebnik, Hiyele (Srebnik's daughter)
 Srebnik, Leibel (Feige Leahele's son-in-law)
 Srebnik, Moshe
 Staretz, Rivka (murdered after the liberation)
 Steinberg, Elka (Yekele's daughter, from the the dry good's
 Steinberg, Leah (Mottel Aryeh's daughter)
 Steinberg, Moshe (Yekele's son, from the dry good's store)
 Steinman, Eliezer
 Stromwasser, Leib
 Sucholitzka, Masha
 Szliwinska, Tzesha (from Shmuel Melamed)

Tennenbojm, Hersh
 Tepperman, Baruch and his wife (from the Zucker's)
 Torenheim, Hersh (grandson of Shmuel Hayyim, [fun di heivn???)
 Trager, Tzalka (Son of Feigele from Broyt)
 Trop, Shlomo and his wife (from the Goldman's)

Tuchmintz, Ephraim (Zomhe's grandson)

Ubogi, Yehiel, his wife Esther Friedman (from Yehoshua Amp)

Uhrmacher, Mulya (Photographer)

Urbach, Berish (from Venice ???)

Utshen, Yaakov (the Rabbi's grandson) and his wife Bayle (Hayyim)

Waksman, Beila

Warm (Rachele Gampel's daughter)

Warm, Leibel (Rachele Gampel's son)

Weinberg, Elka

Weinberg, Velvel

Weinberger, Emil

Weinglass, Yitzhak (Beiba Becker's) and his wife Sheindel

Weinstein, Esther (Leibel Proshekier's daughter)

Weissbrod, Yisroel

Weissman, Gittle

Weissman, Joseph

Weissman, Yehoshuele (David Bolshoy's son)

Welvenes daughter)

Wiernik, Feivel (Chavele Kave's son-in-law)

Wiernik, Shlomo

Wiernik, Yitzhak

Wiesenfeld, Sarah (Weine's)

Winograd, Barach (Community Secretary)

Winograd, Gedaliah (son of Moshe-Mendel Smolarnik)

Winograd--Binstock, Kayla (Mendel Smolarnik's daughter)

Wishnio, Avraham (Shlomole Becker's son)

Wishogradsky, M.

Zaidenfell, Haya

Zaidman, Yisroel (Meir Chayim's son)

Zelnicker, Shmuel

Zhelazo, Moshe

Zhepa, M.

Zilberman, Adela

Zilberstein, Hannah (from Yaakov Shlomo Stopp's)

Zilberstein, Leizer (Ahrele Ketzav's son-in-law)

Zinger, Beryl (from Leizer Gold's)

Zinger, Joseph

Zinger, M.
 Zinger, Meizel
 Zitrinbojm, Esther (the Rabbi's granddaughter)
 Zucker, Matel (Froyme's wife)
 Zucker, Pesah
 Zuckerman, Menuha (Haya Zelda's daughter)
 Zussman, Menicha
 Zussman, Yisroel

Lomaz

Goldscher, Beryl
 Goldscher, Leibl
 Kojfman, Peretz.
 Mandel, Avraham
 Mandel, Gershon
 Weinstein, Leibl (lived in the village of Rogozneczka).
 Weinstein, Yitzhak, his wife and two sons.

Mezritch

(According to Records of the Mezritch Community in the American Zone of Germany)

Ackerman, Aharon 1900
 Ackerman, Bayla 1915
 Ackerman, Bracha 1918 (Yudka)
 Ackerman, Devorah 1939
 Ackerman, Itka 1947
 Ackerman, Mendel 1919 (Yudka)
 Alterman, Rachel 1918 (Zherotshin)
 Alterman, Simha 1919 (Zherotshin)
 Amarnik, Racher 1925
 Auerbach, Chaim 1915

Auerbach, Esther	1924
Auerbach, Gittel	1947
Auerbach, Yaakov	1913
Bassevitch, Dora	1921
Bassevitch, Leon	1914
Bassevitch, Sarah	1947
Baumfleck, Hersh	1946
Baumfleck, Leah	1915
Baumfleck, Moshe	1915
Baumgarten, Meir	
Baumgarten, Moshe	1918
Beckerman, Feivel	1930
Beckerman, Joseph	1943
Beckerman, Leib	1926
Beckerman, Misha	1945
Beckerman, Moshe	
Beckerman, Perl	1947
Beckerman, Sarah	1916
Beckerman, Yeshaya	1910
Benkel, Feige	1918
Benkel, Henech	1947
Benkel, Yitzhak	1920
Berman, Malka	1923
Biederman, Joseph	1904
Birnbaum, Elka	1930
Birnbaum, Haya	1906
Birnbaum, Shmuel	1928
Birnbaum, Yehiel	1900
Blank, Nanya	1926
Blank, Pinhas	1919
Blank, Shmuel David	1947
Bleiweiss, Chaim	1897
Bleiweiss, Malka	1912
Bluestein, Aharon	
Bluestein, Avraham	
Bluestein, Leib	1946
Bluestein, Leizer	1910
Bluestein, Moshe	1939
Bluestein, Sima	1918
Blum, Leib	1928
Blumenkop, Aharon J.	1916

Blumenkop, Miriam 1916
 Blumenkop, Yidl 1922
 Bobkes, Henya 1912
 Bochsbaum, Ida 1947
 Bochsbaum, Isak 1916
 Bochsbaum, Leah 1931
 Bochsbaum, Nyusha 1921
 Bochsbaum, Pesah 1909
 Bochsbaum, Yisroel 1916
 Bordowska, Regina 1928
 Bordowsky, David 1923
 Borenstein, Devorah 1921
 Borenstein, Glicka 1925
 Borenstein, Melech 1923
 Borenstein, Rivka 1917
 Borenstein, Yisrael 1946
 Borenstein, Yitzhak 1909
 Brillschneider, Joel 1926
 Brillschneider, Shl. 1918

Czarny 1899
 Czarny, Avraham 1914
 Czemny, Avraham 1885
 Czemny, Baruch 1928
 Czemny, Dvora 1887
 Czemny, Hanna 1886
 Czemny, Izik 1883
 Czemny, Sheindel 1926
 Czemny, Sonya 1923
 Czmyl, Avraham 1914
 Czmyl, Leah 1910 (Farbman)

Dangot, Alter 1917
 Dangot, Avraham 1916
 Dangot, Chaim 1948
 Dangot, Fradel 1948
 Dangot, Izek 1920
 Dangot, Joseph 1921
 Dangot, Joseph 1929
 Dangot, Menahem 1890
 Dangot, Neche 1931 (Jawerbaum)

Dangot, Reizel Leah	1924
Dangot, Sarah	1885
Dangot, Sarah	1921 (Zaidman)
Dangot, Wolf	1944
David, Minia	1918
David, Zalman	1893
Davidson, Avraham	1915
Davidson, Yaakov	1948
Davidson, Yoche	1924 (Dangot)
Dishel, Yehuda S.	1915
Distelman, Eibard	1920
Distelman, Max	1893
Distelman, Miriam	1888
Domb, Bracha	1920
Domb, Leah	1941
Domb, Mendel	1914
Domb, Moshe	1946
Domb, Shimon	1902
Domb, Yitzhak	1912
Dvosh, Baruch	1920
Dvosh, Dobe	1945
Dvosh, Haya	1920
Dvosh, Lena	1924
Dvosh, Masha	1944
Dvosh, Mordechai	1925

Edelman, Freida	1915
Edelman, Freida	1918
Edelman, Isser	1910
Edelman, Sarah	1937
Edelman, Sarah	1942
Edelman, Shmuel	1919
Edelman, Wowa	1945
Edelman, Yaakov	1946
Eisenberg, Gedalya	1904
Eisenberg, Hersh	1945
Eisenberg, Sarah	1915
Eisenfarb, Alta	1922
Erdfarb, Berl	
Erdfarb, Michel	

Faktewitch, Lahka	1925	
Farbman, Beyla		1931
Farbman, Chaim		1926
Farbman, Esther	1935	
Farbman, Fishel	1929	
Farbman, Moshe		1888
Farbman, Zlata		1897
Feinberg, Leib		1886
Feldman, Mottel	1906	
Feldman, Rachel	1925	
Felstuck, Berl	1897	
Felstuck, Etel	1903	(Gelman)
Figa, Gittel	1919	
Figa, Leib	1914	
Figa, Rachel	1947	
Finkelstein, Eliezer	1900	
Finkelstein, Godel	1923	
Finkelstein, Rivka	1920	
Finkelstein, Shimon	1920	
Finkelstein, Yitzhak	1905	
Fishbein, Eliezer	1900	
Fleishbein, Gedaliah		and his wife of the Krupnik family.
Fleishman, Hanna	1924	(Rosenberg)
Fleishman, Shimon	1924	
Floman, Jurek		1941
Floman, Pearl		1912 (Manperl)
Floman, Reuven		1906
Fogozheletz, Ida	1928	
Fried, Peshah	1947	
Fried, Yadzha		1925
Friedman, Toyba	1915	
Friedman, Yerahmiel	1916	
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Gelman, Aharon		1927
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Gitter, Peshe	1917	
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Glassman, Shimon	1908	

Glazman, Shimon	1916	
Goldberg, Leibel	1920	
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Goldman, Sonya		1931
Goldschar, Zelig W.	1884	
Goldscher, Boris	1916	
Goldscher, Sheindel	1944	
Goldstein, Avraham		1922
Goldstein, Feige	1925	
Goldstein, Moshe	1908	
Goldstein, Shl.Hersh	1914	
Goldstein, Yaakov	1925	
Goldstein, Yisrael	1907	
Goldwasser, Joseph	1918	
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Greenbaum, Feige	1911	
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Greenbaum, Menuha		1937
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Greenberg, Joseph	1919	
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Greenspan, Freida	1927	
Greenspan, Weve	1947	
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Grunman, Yitzhak	1902	
Grunmantel, Yitzhak		
Hechtman, Aharon	1914	
Heitmacher, Eliyahu		1946
Heitmacher, Meir	1916	
Heitmacher, Rivka	1916	
Herman, Adam		1901 (Murdered after the liberation)
Herring, David		1918
Herring, Genya		1918
Hochman, Reizel	1914	
Hochman, Shmuel	1908	
Hoffliat, Minia	1914	
Hoffman, Haya		1927
Hoffman, Moshe A.		1919

Hoffman, Nahum 1947

Jager, Lieba 1928

Jamnik, Doba 1930 (Silberpitz)

Jamnik, Yidl 1924

Jawerbaum, Berl 1947

Jawerbaum, Chaim 1919

Jawerbaum, Dorota 1943

Jawerbaum, Feiga 1944

Jawerbaum, Hanna 1945

Jawerbaum, Haya 1922

Jawerbaum, Minna 1918

Jawerbaum, Moshe 1911

Jawerbaum, Moshe 1943

Jawerbaum, Mottel 1904

Jawerbaum, Shmuel 1908

Jawerbaum, Yaakov 1913

Jawerbaum, Yadzhia 1923

Jawerbaum, Zippora 1921

Kahane, Avraham 1936

Kahane, Fishel 1895

Kahane, Lieba 1902

Kalinka, Devorah 1947

Kalinka, Feiga 1916

Kalinka, Hanina 1911

Kalinka, Rachel 1941

Kamien, Haya Malka 1947

Kamien, Henya 1943

Kamien, Leib 1919

Kamien, Rachel 1922

Kamien, Sarah 1915

Katz, Leibel + wife and child

Katz, Menuha 1927 (Czemny)

Katz, Noah 1920

Katz, Shmuel 1947

Katzberg 1948

Katzberg, Chaim 1920

Katzberg, Clara 1942

Katzberg, Nathan 1910

Katzberg, Shimon 1945

Katzman, Chaim 1920
 Kershenbaum, Sheindel 1923
 Kesselbrenner, F. 1924
 Kesselbrenner, Hersh 1947
 Kesselbrenner, S. 1921
 Kidishman, Benjamin 1918
 Kidishman, Chaim 1945
 Kidishman, Hanna 1922
 Kidishman, Yaakov 1947
 Kilstein, Hanna 1928
 Kilstein, Michel 1924
 Kipperbaum, Rachel 1918
 Kipperbaum, Sarah 1941
 Kipperbaum, Shimon 1910
 Kipperbaum, Yitzhak 1946
 Kirsholtz, Joseph 1943
 Kirsholtz, Sarah 1922 (Hecht)
 Kirsholtz, Sewek 1916
 Kirsholtz, Yaakov 1945
 Kleinman, Bracha 1928 (Farbman)
 Kleinman, Katya 1914
 Kleinman, Yaakov 1924
 Klotz, Chaya 1947
 Klotz, Lieba 1919
 Klotz, Shlomo 1912
 Klotz, Yaakov 1942
 Kogod, Basha 1914 (Gurman)
 Kogod, Brita 1946
 Kogod, Joseph 1912
 Kogod, Rosa 1921
 Kogod, Yaakov 1945
 Kogod, Yitzhak 1914
 Kolnowitsky, Rivka 1914 (Goldstein)
 Kolnowitzky, Avraham 1910
 Kopich, Yisrael 1885
 Kopitch, Sarah 1886
 Kopitowsky, Chaim 1926
 Kopitowsky, Reizel 1927
 Kopitowsky, Shmuel 1947
 Kornblum, Joseph 1923
 Krawiecka, Henya 1928
 Krukwasser, Feivel 1917
 Krupnik, David 1921

Krupnik, Hanna	1945
Krupnik, Moshe	1947
Krupnik, Sheindel	1927
Kupperwasser, Dora	1926
Lammelman	
Lazer, Beyla	1940
Lazer, Brendel	1910
Lazer, Miriam	1922
Lazer, Moshe	
Lazer, Moshe	1947
Lazer, Mottel	1913
Lazer, Shalom	1902
Leibovitch, Perl	1945
Leibovitch, Rachel	1923 (Goldstein)
Leibovitch, Tzvi	1919
Lempert, Bracha	1931
Lempert, Manya	1917
Lempert, Zina	1922
Lentznowsky, Itka	1915
Lentznowsky, M.	1910
Lentznowsky, Rivka	1946
Lewenson, Georg	1910
Lewenson, Manya	1913
Lewenson, Yaakov	1947
Liebman, Berl	1931
Liebman, Feiga	1900
Liebman, Gittel	1933
Liebman, Hanna	1938
Liebman, Moshe	1928
Liebman, Reizel	1903
Liebman, Shprintza	1931
Liebman, Sonya	1941
Liebman, Yona	1900
Listgarten, Avraham	1894
Listgarten, Blima	1926
Listgarten, Dvora	1927
Listgarten, Itka	1946
Listgarten, Shlomo	1922
Listgarten, Yitzhak	1914
Loew, Dvorah	1919
Loew, Leah	1885

Lukowsky, Malka 1919 (Dangot)
 Lukowsky, Yaakov 1915

Makuwka, Beyla 1917
 Makuwka, Leizer 1913
 Makuwka, Moshe 1947
 Makuwka, Tshipa 1917
 Mandelbaum, Fanya 1940
 Mandelbaum, Hanan 1947
 Mandelbaum, Rachel 1914
 Mandelbaum, Rivka 1947
 Mandelbaum, Rosa 1917
 Mandelbaum, Shosha 1946
 Mandelbaum, Zalka 1919
 Mandelbaum, Zindel 1919
 Manperl, Aviva 1942
 Manperl, Berl 1903
 Manperl, Beyla 1899
 Manperl, Joseph 1899
 Maus, Chaim 1947
 Maus, Freindel 1914
 Maus, Shalom 1906
 Michalewitch
 Michalewitch, Dvorah
 Michalewitch, Freida 1945
 Michalewitch, Moshe
 Michalewitch, Pinya 1914
 Michalewitch, Rivka 1918
 Miendzizhetska, H. 1914
 Migdal, Anna 1923
 Migdal, David 1919
 Migdal, Gittel 1946
 Migdal, Pinhas 1914
 Miller, Aharon 1911
 Miller, Rivka 1922 (Roseman)
 Monk, Genya 1925
 Monk, Joseph 1913
 Morawietz, Esther 1912
 Morawietz, Hersh 1897
 Morgenstern, Esther 1918
 Mushinska, Ida 1915
 Mushinska, Rachel 1916

Mushinska, Riwa 1920
 Mushinsky, Stanislaw 1909
 Mushinsky, Yaakov 1941

Neistein, Joseph 1920 (Murdered after Liberation)
 Neistein, Pinya + wife and child.
 Neistein, Shulamit 1921
 Newman, Esther 1946
 Newman, Nathan 1916
 Newman, Rosa 1919
 Niebiesky, Chaim 1927

Oberhand, Asher 1920
 Ochsenhorn, Avraham 1920
 Ochsenhorn, Hanna 1945
 Ochsenhorn, Zissel 1921

Perel, Leon 1910
 Perel, Pearl 1946
 Perel, Yenta 1918 (Friedman)
 Podoliak, Meyer 1906

Rabinowitch, Pinhas 1898
 Rabinowitch, Sarah 1898
 Rappaport, Moshe 1899
 Reichman, Gershon 1909
 Reichman, Leibel 1906
 Reinwein, Aharon 1913
 Rendel, David 1923
 Rendel, Malka 1926
 Rendel, Ziela 1947
 Rimarzh, Avraham 1926
 Rimarzh, Chaim 1921
 Rimarzh, Gedaliah 1946
 Rimarzh, Henya 1926
 Ritner, Golda 1908 (Alterman)
 Ritner, Yisrael 1911
 Roseman, Hanna 1943
 Roseman, Hersch 1914

Roseman, Pearl	1914
Rosemarin, David	1941
Rosemarin, Gittel	1920
Rosemarin, Leizer	1914
Rosemarin, Yitzhak	1945
Rosemarin, Zalman	1944
Rosen, Esther	1922
Rosen, Feiga	1922
Rosen, Yaakov	1940
Rosen, Yitzhak	1912
Rosenbaum, Alter	1913
Rosenbaum, Avigdor	1918
Rosenbaum, Esther	1917
Rosenbaum, Esther	1946
Rosenbaum, Hanna	1915
Rosenbaum, Leah	1946
Rosenbaum, Liftshe	1920
Rosenbaum, Mala	1943
Rosenbaum, Yitzhak	1924
Rosenbaum, Zvi	1916
Rosenblum, Elka	1925 (Tama)
Rosenblum, Joseph	1930
Rosenblum, Moshe	1926
Rosenblum, Yitzhak	1925
Rosenblum, Yitzhak	1925
Rosengarten, Anshel	1918
Rosenzumen, Sima	1922
Rosenzweig, Chaim	1909
Rosenzweig, Chaya	1941
Rosenzweig, Hanan	1933
Rosenzweig, Itta	1909
Rosenzweig, Leah	1922
Rosenzweig, Meyer	1947
Rosenzweig, Toyba	1936
Rotenberg, Masha	1919
Rothstein, Eliezer	1917
Rottholtz, Chaim	1918
Rottholtz, Mottek	1940
Rottholtz, Pesach	1943
Rottholtz, Rivka	1945
Rottholtz, Sarah	1919
Rubenstein, Gershon	with wife, Freidel (Bluestein) and child
Rubenstein, Moshe	with wife and child

Rubenstein, Mottel 1934
 Rubenstein, Shimon 1934

Saneluk, Chaim 1919
 Saneluk, Doba 1926
 Sapocznyk, Baruch 1937
 Sapocznyk, Haya Sara 1909
 Sarna, Freida 1913
 Sarna, Toyba 1942
 Sarna, Tshipa 1889
 Sarna, Yeshaya 1913
 Schneiderman, Golda 1905
 Schneiderman, Yaakov 1897
 Schneiderman, Yaakov 1909
 Shapiro, Chaya 1888
 Shapiro, Rivka 1930
 Shapiro, Shlomo 1933
 Shedlarzh, Avraham 1910
 Shedlarzh, Eliyahu 1937
 Shedlarzh, Feiga 1946
 Shedlarzh, Lieba 1917
 Sheimel, Ben Zion 1889
 Sheimel, Blima 1900
 Shenkarzh, Frimet 1915
 Shenkarzh, Hersh 1909
 Shenkarzh, Sarah 1947
 Shichman, Shmuel 1923
 Shiner, Leah 1919 (Diamond)
 Shiner, Mordechai 1947
 Shiner, Shlomo 1914
 Shpiro, Itka 1928
 Shpiro, Lutek 1921
 Siberpits, Feiga 1898
 Silberberg, Lyuba 1924
 Silberpits, Meir 1898
 Silberpits, Meir 1922
 Silberpits, Peretz 1928
 Silberpits, Shmuel 1933
 Slomka, Mendel 1947
 Slomka, Rivka 1921
 Slomka, Shmuel 1921
 Sommer, Avraham 1911

Sommer, Frima	1921
Sommer, Yitzhak	1947
Stein, Chaya	1904
Stein, Chaya	1911
Stein, Paltiel	1913
Stein, Shepsel	1894
Stein, Yehezkiel	1905
Stockhammer, Berl	1947
Stockhammer, Itka	1917 (Wengerek)
Stockhammer, Yitzhak	1914
Strasmeister, Avra.	1920
Strasmeister, Hamma	1946
Strasmeister, Pearl	1910
Strasmeister, Yaakov	1902
Strikowsky, Devorah	1945
Strikowsky, Gittel	1942
Strikowsky, Moshe	1917
Strikowsky, Shprinza	1915
Stubaum, Feiga	
Stubaum, Michel	
Stubaum, Mottel	
Studnik, Yenta	1927 (Greenbaum)
Studnik, Shifra	1947
Szmietanka, Shlomo	1927

Tama, Eliyahu	1946
Tama, Elka	1921
Tama, Moshe	1921
Tama, Rivka	1927
Tandeter, Toyba	1924
Tashmowsky, Dvoshe	1917
Tashmowsky, Golda	1942
Tashmowsky, Haya Ita	1947
Tashmowsky, Mottel	1912
Tennenbaum, Avraham	1947
Tennenbaum, Haya	1926
Tennenbaum, Moshe	1917
Tennenbaum, Moshe	1922
Tennenbaum, Shaul	1918
Tennenbaum, Sholka	1920
Tennenbaum, Yaakov	1918
Tennenbaum, Yaakov	1927

Tisch, Benjamin	1944
Tisch, Gnedel	1917
Treiman, Hanan	1919
Tugender, Chasha	1934
Tugender, David	1945
Tugender, Gittel	1944
Tugender, Hinda	1944
Tugender, Moshe	1919
Tugender, Moshe	1919
Tugender, Mottel	1921
Tugender, Sana	1904
Tugender, Sara	1915
Tugender, Sarah	1915
Tugender, Yidl	1899
Tulup, Hanna	1884

Ulinover, Hans	1918
Ulinover, Rachel	1920
Ulinover, Rivka	1947

Wagshal, Aharon	1914
Weinberg, David	1924
Weinberg, Feige	1905
Weinberg, Joseph	1897
Weinberg, Yisrael	1936
Weingarten, Yisrael	(with wife and children)
Weinstock, Pesse	1914
Weintraub, Avraham	1925
Weissglass, Koyfche	1914
Weissglass, Miriam	1944
Weissglass, Sarah	1918
Weissglass, Shimon	1947
Weissman, Leo	1888
Weissman, Shalom	1918
Weissman, Ziele	1902
Wengerek, Blima	194?
Wengerek, Chana	1944
Wengerek, Haya	1916
Wengerek, Rivka	1940
Wengerek, Shlomo	1914
Wishnya, Chaim	1920

Wishnya, Haya	1920
Wishnya, Hersh	1944
Wishnya, Shmerl	1947

Zatorski, Naftali	1911
Zdanowitch, Rachel	1921
Zeifstein, Benzion	1922
Zemba, Avraham	1943
Zemba, Hanna	1918
Zemba, Leib	1948
Zemba, Nissan	1919
Zeplinska, Sheindel	1920
Zisman, Gittel	1940
Zisman, Salla	1920
Zisman, Yitzhak	1912
Zitriniak, Chava	1916
Zitriniak, Hersh	1944
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AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Most of the surviving Jews from Biala and Mezritch were saved in Soviet Russia.

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